

The Universality of Prayer

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's purposes in prayer, moving from self-centered requests to a God-centered approach.

Duration: 1:19:39

Scripture: 1 Kings 8:27, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 6:9

Topics: "Gods Provision", "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the issue of food scarcity in the world and attributes it to the influence of the evil one. He emphasizes that God always provides plenty of food, but it is the greed and selfishness of mankind that deprives others of it. The preacher refers to Psalm 104, which highlights God's role as the provider of food for all living creatures. He also emphasizes the importance of living in the present and trusting God to provide for our needs, rather than worrying about the future. The sermon concludes with a parable about forgiveness, emphasizing the importance of extending forgiveness to others as God has forgiven us.

Transcript

The Gospel according to Matthew chapter 6, we'll read from verse 9 through verse 13. Thus therefore pray ye, our Father who art in the heavens, let thy name be sanctified, let thy kingdom come, let thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon the earth. Give us today our needed bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but save us from evil. We have been sharing together on the so-called Lord's Prayer. We mentioned at the very outset that this is the prayer that our Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

And yet we call it the Lord's Prayer. Because we do believe that our Lord Jesus would never teach us anything that which he himself does not practice. So evidently it is the Lord's Prayer.

It is the prayer that our Lord Jesus prayed while he was on earth. And it is the prayer that he wants his people to join with him in praying. We mentioned that this Lord's Prayer is based upon a relationship.

Because it begins with our Father who art in the heavens. We can pray because he is our Father. And when we pray in this manner, it is more than because he is our Father, but because we as his children

have grown up.

And we begin to understand his thought. And we begin to share with his burden. So that's the reason why you find when we first believe in the Lord Jesus, we do pray.

At the moment we all say we cry out Abba Father. Prayer is natural to us. It is our right.

It is an enjoyment to us as God's children. But we will notice that in the beginning when we pray, we pray as babes in Christ. And as babes in Christ, of course, all that we are interested in with our Father is to receive something from him.

Our prayer is rather self-centered, self-interest. But this is the initial stage of our being God's children. But as we grow up in the Lord, as we are disciples to Christ, as we begin to be under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, as we learn to know him more, then our Lord Jesus said, our prayer shall have a change.

In other words, our prayer should not be centered upon our needs. But our prayer should be centered upon God's purpose. We should not be self-centered in our prayer life.

We should be more God-centered in our prayer life. So in a sense, this Lord's Prayer, that our Lord Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, is not everyone who is a child of God is able to pray in this manner. We may have recited this prayer from our childhood.

We may know the words intimately. But oftentimes we just repeat the words. But we do not really understand what we are praying.

We do not enter into that prayer as we should. And because of that, that prayer doesn't mean much to us. But we must remember that this is a prayer that our Lord Jesus teaches his church to pray.

He teaches those children of God who have become the disciples of Christ. Those who are grown up to understand the Father, and to stand with the Father in his purpose. And it is upon that we pray our Father who art in the heavens.

We mentioned at the very beginning that in the original Greek, you'll find it is our Father who art in the heavens. It is in plural number. And we believe that it tells us that our Father, who is not only in the third heaven where his throne is, but our Father is in the second heaven where the stars are, and our Father is in the first heaven where the air is.

In other words, no matter what happens in whatever heaven it may be, there is our Father. And there is he with us. A sparrow falls into the ground not without your Father's permission.

But in the original, we do not have the word permission. We say it, not a sparrow will fall into the ground without the Father. In other words, not only the Father permits that sparrow to fall, but as that sparrow falls, he actually comes down with that sparrow.

He has never left us nor forsaken us. So brothers and sisters, we do see that our Father is the Father in the heavens. He is in control over all things.

No matter what happens to us, there he is with us. And it is to this Father that we are praying. In the Lord's Prayer you'll find the primary subject of prayer is not our prayer.

It is our Father's need. In other words, we stand on the side of our Heavenly Father and pray. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done. And thy name be hallowed. It is his name, his kingdom, and his will.

Now we know that the will of the Father prevails in heaven. He has all these angelic hosts executing his will. And we know his kingdom is supreme in the heaven.

Because there in the heaven he rules supreme. Everything is under him. And everything there in heaven takes up his character.

And also we know in heaven his name is always. Wherever in the Bible you'll find people see the heavens open. And caught a vision of heaven.

You will hear the cry of the living beast, the seraphim, the cherubim. They are crying out, holy, holy, holy. There his name is always honored.

There his name is unchallenged. There his name is respected. Stands alone above everything unique, special.

That is the name of our Father. But unfortunately we find this is not true on earth yet. One day it will be true.

One day his name shall be hallowed on earth as it is in heaven. One day his kingdom will come upon this earth as it is in heaven. And one day his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We know it is coming and is coming very rapidly. But today we find it is not yet universally true. And unfortunately it is not even universally true.

No, no, the church is where his name should be hallowed. The church is where his kingdom really is. And the church is where his will is being done.

That is what God wants the church to be. That is what the church ought to be. But unfortunately we find that as the church of God, as his people.

Often times his name is not hallowed. On the contrary we find we bring disgrace. Sometimes we put his name evil to ourselves, to other people, even to Athene.

We make him common, we profane him. And that is a very unfortunate thing. And for this reason we need to pray this prayer.

That his name be honored, hallowed, in the midst of the church on earth. And then of course through the church his name will be honored throughout the whole universe. And the same thing is true with his kingdom.

Are we really characterized by his character? Wherever he rules, his character will be characterizing us. But is it true with us? Are we manifesting the character of God? Instead we manifest our own character. How we need a transformation.

How we need a kingdom to be supreme in our lives. And for this reason again we have to pray. Thy kingdom come.

Not only his kingdom will come one day in the future on earth. But we pray that his kingdom will be a reality in us today. And the same thing with his will.

His will is done in heaven. And we are supposed to be a people who do his will. But often times we do our own will.

And we need to pray that not my will, but thy will. So in other words brothers and sisters, as God's people, as the church of God, we need to stand with God and pray this prayer. And if we do pray in this manner, it shows that we do stand for God's glory.

We do stand for God's right. We do stand for him. And as we pray the Holy Spirit first will begin to work in our lives.

And make all these real in us. Now we mention also that whenever the Holy Spirit works in our lives, the cross will be the mark. You cannot find the working of the Holy Spirit without leaving the mark of the cross.

How our self-life must be crucified in order that he may increase and we decrease. So this is the centrality of prayer. The very center of the Lord's prayer.

And hopefully that we may take it to heart. Now this morning we will come into what we call the universality of prayer. In other words, after we have prayed thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, thy name be hallowed, then the Lord Jesus said we should continue to pray.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil.

In this Lord's prayer you find a divine order. And that divine order is we need to pray for his name, his kingdom, his will first. And then we pray for our need, for us, for ourselves.

Now oftentimes we find in our prayer we reverse the order. Or we just have the last part and never really touch. In our prayer we always put ourselves first.

Our needed bread. Our sound soul. A good spirit.

And this is what we really are interested in. We are so self-centered people. And we need to deliver from that.

And put God first. You know in our Christian life a priority is a very important thing. Life is so complicated.

Life is filled with so many things. There are so many businesses that we have to attain to. And our time is just limited, so short.

That's the reason why you'll find priority is a very important factor in our Christian life. If we do not have the right priority we find that we will be led astray. But if we really set the priority right then the direction of our life will be correct.

Now unfortunately we find among God's people we do not set our priority right. And because of that how much we do suffer. And how much God suffers because of us.

You know in the so-called Sermon on the Mount. You'll find our Lord Jesus said, Before you ask these things your Father has already known. In other words our Heavenly Father, He knows what we need.

Before even we ask of Him. And that's the reason why the Lord Jesus said, Do not worry. Do not be careful.

Do not be anxious about your life. What you should eat. Do not be careful about your body.

What you should drink. What you should be close with. These are the things that the nations, the Gentiles, they seek after.

But certainly not you. Because your Heavenly Father knows that you need these things. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

And all these things shall be added. You know you cannot blame the world, the nations, the Gentiles. To seek after these things.

What they should eat. What they should drink. What they should be close with.

They have to seek after these things. Why? Because there is nobody else to take care of them. And if they don't seek for them, they won't have them.

But this is not true with us, who are God's children. We have a Heavenly Father. And our Heavenly Father knows that we need these things.

And certainly He will take care of us. And therefore it is not right for us to seek these things. You know with the people of the world, they are not contented with just having all their necessities met.

They want to live a luxurious living. They want something more than is necessary. And because they want something more than is necessary, they are never contented, satisfied.

And that's the reason why they fall into all kinds of temptations. And they lie down in sorrows. But we as God's children, the Bible tells us that Godliness with contentment is great gain.

In other words, we know that our Heavenly Father will supply all our needs. And we are contented to have our meat met. We are not trying to live in such a luxurious way of life, because we are pilgrims.

Now if this earth is our permanent home, then we have to decorate it in such a way that we really enjoy to the uttermost. But as strangers and pilgrims, we are just passing by. You may be here today, you may not be here tomorrow.

This is not our home. And because of that, Godliness with contentment is great gain. The Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

And all these things shall be added unto us. These things shall be added. These things shall not be sought.

You know, if we seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness first, these things will be added to us. Now sometimes you think that, why is it that these things are not added? It is because you are not seeking the Kingdom of God first. You know, there is an example in the Old Testament.

You find the children of Israel, a remnant came back from Babylonian captivity. Now why did they come back? During the 70 years of Babylonian captivity, you know the Jewish people that were slaves, captured, carried into a foreign country. But even in that foreign country, they lived a good life.

You know, they began to settle down, and they are good in making money, always. And there you find they began to have their businesses, to build their houses, and they began to enjoy their life in the strange land. And also you find under the Babylonian rule and under the Persian rule, actually they were given a certain degree of liberty, of religious freedom.

Now if they were not given religious freedom, probably they would not feel that comfortable. But they were given a large amount of religious freedom. They were able to worship God in the land of captivity.

Actually their captivity healed them of their idol worshiping. And in the land of captivity they wanted to worship God. But of course there was no temple.

There was no altar, no sacrifice. They couldn't do that, because the temple must be built in Jerusalem on the site that God has chosen, where His name was put there. And you could not offer sacrifices anywhere else.

But there in the land of captivity, they had the freedom to worship, and they wanted to worship. So they invented a most ingenious religious invention, and that is the system of synagogue. You know the system of synagogue is the most ingenious invention.

Why? Because in the synagogue you can do anything you want to. You can read the Torah, you can read the prophets, you can sing songs, you can pray prayers, and you can exhort one another. There is a perfect liberty in the synagogue.

You know, any Jewish man can stand up and ask a question, or stand up and give an address. You know, it's free. And better than that, if you don't agree with anybody, you just get hold of another nine men of leisure.

That is, another nine Jewish men who have time and who are willing to devote some time for God. You can have your own synagogue of your taste. And you find that is a good way to worship God.

You know, you can worship God according to your taste. Now isn't that wonderful? So no wonder, after they lived in Babylon for 70 years, when God gave them the opportunity to return to Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple, very few cared. They were God's chosen people.

But there in the land of captivity, they lived for themselves. They were not an irreligious people. They were very religious.

But they lived for themselves. And here you find a remnant. They answered the call of God.

They returned to Jerusalem. In other words, you find a people who really returned to live for God. They did not live for themselves.

They lived for God because Jerusalem was a ruin at that time. There was nothing there. But they went back to rebuild the temple.

In other words, they went back for God's name, for His kingdom, for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And what a glory it is. But even with that people, when they met a little opposition, they gave up.

They gave up building the temple. They said, this is not the time to do that. It is not convenient.

They do not give up completely building the temple. They just say, it is not convenient. We'll wait for a more convenient time and we'll do it.

But time must be occupied. If they are not building the temple, they have to build something. And what did they do? They built their own houses.

And if you read Haggai, you will find the houses they built were not just huts. They built panel houses. You know, they want to live very well.

You know, so they began to build their houses. And during those 10 to 15 years, they left the temple there lying in waste, and they began to build their houses. And did they enjoy their lives? If you are in Babylon, you may.

But if you are in Jerusalem, you will not. Because here you'll find when the prophet Haggai was sent by God to them, you know what the prophet Haggai told them? He said, consider. You just consider.

You sow much, you gain little. You drink, but you are not satisfied. You are clothed, but you do not get a wash.

You earn wages, but you earn wages and put in a bag with holes. In other words, they who are supposed to live for God, and when they began to live for themselves, they did not have the privilege of really enjoying life. God would not allow them to do that.

Now that's the mercy of God. Isn't it true with God's people today? If you care very little for God, you may be able to love the world and live a pretty, comfortable, even luxurious life. But if you love the Lord, and if you do understand that your life belongs to the Lord, and you have to live for Him, and you do have the intention, the heart to do so, and yet somehow your priority is wrong.

Somehow you are trying to build your own houses and leave the house of God in ruin. You know what will happen? You will never be satisfied. Thank God He does not allow you to.

Because He wants you to live completely for Him. For His kingdom. For His name.

And for His will. So brothers and sisters, we need to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you.

You know with the children of Israel that is true. After they resume the building of the temple, then the Lord set the day and said, Now from this day onward it will be different. You will have abundance.

God will open the window of heaven and pour down His blessing. And how true. So do not seek for the things.

These things. The Gentiles. The unbelievers.

They seek after these things. But these things are below our dignity. Not for us to seek these things.

We seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And these things shall be added. And He always did.

Now if this is the case, probably we will ask this question. Now why is it then that the Lord teaches us to pray, Give us this day our daily bread. Now isn't it true that He knows what we need beforehand? Is it not true that He will add these things to our soul? You don't need to ask for these things.

Now why should we want us to ask for these things? I think there are several reasons. Number one, the reason why He still wants us to ask, Give us this day our daily bread. It is because He wants us to cultivate a kind of spirit.

A spirit of dependence. A spirit of... You know, sometimes we may think now, We seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first. And because we are doing that, We don't need to take care of our daily bread.

You know, He will add unto us. We are too spiritual to bother with these physical, material things. And as we are taking that kind of attitude, In a sense we become so spiritually proud.

If there is spiritual pride. You know, we can't be in such a way. We think that now we depend upon our spirituality to get our daily food.

Instead of depend upon God to give us our daily food. And God doesn't like that. He wants us to always have a sense of how we depend upon our Heavenly Father.

Number two, I think the reason is, He said, give us this day our... You know, this is the prayer of the church. In other words, the Lord's prayer is not a personal prayer. The Lord's prayer is a corporate.

You may not have the need for your daily bread today. But somewhere, your brothers and sisters, Members of the body of Christ, May be in need of a daily bread. And because of that, we cannot be so selfish, That when we have our need met, Then we just do not pray anymore.

We have to remember that we are members of the one body. Brothers and sisters, in the Lord's prayer, It creates within us a body conscious. We are not only thinking of our needs.

We are thinking of the need of our brothers and sisters. And you know that there is always such a need to pray. We live in such a hostile world.

And the world is a sinful world. And because of that, we find that many places, All over the world, there will always be some famine, Some hunger, some need. So when we have our need met, Thank God for that, Do not forget our brothers and sisters, In other places in the world.

So that is the reason why we always need number three. Why do we need to pray for our daily need? It is because we have an enemy upon this earth. And this enemy is always trying to starve us.

You know, he tries to wear us out. If not spiritually, then physically. This is one of the ways of the murderer.

Satan is the murderer. So you find that we live in this hostile world. And the enemy is always trying to oppress us, To deprive us even of our daily need.

He will make situations so difficult. And it is difficult. You know, for the people of the world, They can do many things that we cannot do.

And because we cannot do these unrighteous things, We will find sometimes difficult to make a living. The enemy is trying to deprive us of our very maintenance. And for this reason we need to pray.

And through prayer we overcome the enemy. Through prayer we find that the enemy is not able to deprive us, To wear us out, To starve us to death. So that is the reason why we need to pray this prayer.

And the fourth reason is, When we pray this prayer, And have our prayer answered, Then it will increase our praises. Thanksgiving. You know, when you find your daily need met, In a marvelous way, Then you know, no one can do that but your Heavenly Father.

And for that you are thankful. And you praise God. You glorify His name.

So, I do believe that there are many reasons why, Even after the Lord said, Seek ye first, and then all these things shall be added unto you, He still wants us to pray for our daily bread. God is the supply. Now, brothers and sisters, God is love.

You know, before God created man, He created first the things that man would need. You know, He first created the trees. Bearing fruit.

Before He created man. Because the man He created needed to eat. And there you'll find all the wonderful fruits, In the Garden of Eden.

There was plenty. No lack of food. God always provides for His own.

And you'll find that because man sinned, The earth was cursed. And man had to labor, To toil, For his living. Now the earth still grows wheat, Corn.

But the earth grows also thorns and thistles. So you have to sweat, In order to make a living. And in a sense that's very good, Because if man is too leisure, He tends to sin.

So God forced him to work. So busy. He has no time to think of sinning.

You know? And here you'll find He is working for a living. Now even if the earth is cursed, You'll find there is still plenty, Upon this earth. Now why is it today we find food becomes a big problem in the world? It is not because God does not give plenty.

It is because of the greatness. You know? It is the sin of man that deprives people of food. God always gives plenty.

There should be plenty. But here you'll find on this earth, There is hunger. Maybe one-half, one-third of the world population lives in hunger, in starvation.

Now this ought not to be. Why? Because this world is under the evil one. You know? And we live under that kind of hostile soul.

We do thank God that He always gives. You know if you read Psalm 104. Psalm 104 is a beautiful psalm.

It tells of how God created all things. And after He has created all things, how He gives food to all things. You know? It says that all look to God when He gives their things.

You know? God is the giver. And we need to always remember that He is the giver of our daily bread. You know the world thinks that they earn their bread by their own labor.

But we ought not to. We know better. We know that it is true we have to labor.

It is God's will for us to do so. But even if we labor and that God does not bless, there will be no food. Or even if you got the food and you don't have the appetite, now you cannot eat.

So we do know who is the giver. And we look to God for our daily food. You know when we thank God at meals? It is not a ritual.

It is not a form. Why is it that when we take meals we give thanks? Because we know who gives us. And we are thankful.

And this is what it ought to be. Give us today. Brothers and sisters, God wants us to live one day.

He says, do not be anxious. Because tomorrow has its own evil. You know the words, every day has its evil.

We live on this evil world. And every day has its evil. Its trials, its temptations, its testings, its tribulations of all kinds, its problems.

Every day has something there. So do not borrow tomorrow for today. Now it makes it unbearable.

The Lord wants us to live one day at a time. Just trust. Now that doesn't mean that we cannot plan it.

You know, it doesn't mean that God wants us to be careless. Irresponsible. Now there are some people in this world who are like that.

They live one day at a time, that's true. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. So why bother tomorrow? Enjoy today.

You know, that is not the kind of life God wants us to live. You know, we can plan. But of course, we know that we can plan.

Disposable. In other words, in the book of James, you'll find some people say, now I will today or tomorrow go to a certain city and stay there for a year and do business and gain a lot of money. The Lord says, you do not know where you will be tomorrow.

All you need to do is, if the Lord wills, then I will go there. Brothers and sisters, that should be always our attitude. Our attitude is, if the Lord wills.

Our attitude is, we live daily before the Lord. Trusting Him that He takes care of tomorrow as He takes care of today. Now, this kind of life will deprive us, take away from us anxiety.

You know, the problem today is people live in constant pressure of security, of anxiety. What will happen tomorrow? What will happen ten years from now? We try to accumulate enough for your lifetime, but you do not know how long you will live. Whether ten years will be enough or twenty years will be enough.

And then you'll find a parable that our Lord Jesus said that man, he said, well, I have so much, and I have prepared all things that I need, and he tells his soul, and said, now, soul, just rest and enjoy yourself. You have enough for your whole life. But the Lord said, you will go.

So, brothers and sisters, we need to see, give us truth. Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow we'll take care by God.

Today, God will take care of you. So you are asked for today. Give us this day, our needed.

In other words, God promises to give us all that we need. But God has not promised us to give us more than. So do not try to get more.

You know, may I say something? Modern civilization is very convenient in one sense. But in another sense, it really is not conducive. Why? Because it's too complicated.

You know, we live with so many things that are not needed. And actually, these unneeded things are the things that entangle. Now, if we can live a sinful life, you'll find that our life will be much purer, easier, and spiritually conducive.

So that is what our Lord Jesus wants us to do. When we pray, give us this day, our daily bread. On the one hand, it creates in us a spirit of looking to God for our physical need.

We know He is our supplier. On the other hand, it gives us a consciousness of the body of Christ. And at the same time, it does help us to live.

You know, this is not just a prayer that you pray. You know, when you pray, it affects you first. Now, do not think that prayer changes God.

Prayer never changes God. Prayer changes you. Now, if a prayer does not change you, it is a prayer of the lips.

It is not a prayer of the heart. So, when we pray this prayer, even though it relates to physical things, material things, and we need these things. Now, when we cannot live without food, God, our Lord Jesus said, man does not live by bread alone.

You know, He does not say, man does not live by bread. He does not say, He said man does not live by bread alone. You know, so we do need bread.

But, sometimes the Bible uses the word soul to represent man. Seventy souls enter into Egypt. In other words, seventy men, people, enter into Egypt.

So, soul is the seat of our personality. But unfortunately, you find when men sin, sin enters into man's soul and reigns within him. You know, in Romans it says, sin reigns in you.

That is in our soul. Our personality is contaminated, is poisoned. You know, therefore you find self becomes the soul life.

You know, the soul life is self. And self is the nature of sin. Therefore, everything that comes from our soul expresses ourselves.

What we think, how we feel, how we decide, all expresses that selfish, corrupted, sinful eye. Now, that is how fallen we are. But thank God, we find our Lord Jesus came into this world to save us.

He saved our whole being. Not just our body, not just our spirit, but also our soul. You know, that is the reason why in the scripture you do find this term, salvation of the soul.

For instance, in 1 Peter, chapter 1, I think it is verse 9, salvation of the soul. And you find in Hebrew, the saving of the soul. Now, sometimes we mix up these things, soul and spirit, you know.

Because we do not see the difference between soul and spirit. Now, for an unbeliever, that is true. Because his spirit is dead.

So far as God is concerned, soul with him is soul and body, that's all. You know, when I was in China, a missionary lived with us, we called her grandma. She brought my father to the Lord, and we do thank God for that.

And whenever something happened, he said, oh my soul and body. You know, it becomes an expression. You know, where is the spirit? Now, people do not know they have a spirit.

They think they are just soul and body, that's all. But anyway, you'll find that when you are born again, what is born again? Born again is the rebirth of your spirit. He that is born of the spirit is spirit.

He that is born of the Holy Spirit is the new human spirit. And that is the reason why the Holy Spirit can dwell in that new spirit cry out after Father. Now, when we are born again, it is deep down within us, our spirit is born, is renewed, comes into life with God.

We are of faith. A relationship is made with the Heavenly Father. Because God is spirit, and we have a human spirit renewed that can contact and commune with God.

Now, that is what we call being saved. But after we are saved, now how about our soul? Our soul. Sometimes we say, you have a new spirit, but old soul.

Or to put it in another way, you have a new heart, but an old mind, old brain. Now, isn't that true? We find many Christians today, they are saved, thank God for that. In their heart, you know, they have believed the Lord Jesus with their heart.

The Lord dwells within them. No doubt about that. There is every evidence they are the Lord.

But unfortunately you find that their mind or their brain is just as old as it was before. In other words, they still think the same way. They still evaluate things in the old way.

Their outlook hasn't changed. You know, they love the things of the world just like the people of the world love them. And they have not much desire for the things spiritual.

They still desire the things worldly. And they do not desire the things spiritual. In other words, you find they still carry with them old mind and old... Their soul need to be... You see, transformation in the scripture refers to when our soul is transformed.

Our soul is... Now, I will not get into that too much. But anyway, you find that there is our soul. Now, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, you know what the Lord Jesus did? When He died on the cross, He not only bore our sins in His body, and through the shedding of His blood, our sins are remitted, forgiven.

Thank God for that. But our Lord Jesus did more than that. When He died on the cross, He died on the cross as us.

In other words, not only He took our sins upon Himself and died for us, but He took us within Him and died as us. Therefore, you find when He died, we died. In other words, on that cross, our Lord was crucified.

And in His crucifixion, our self-life, the life of the soul, was crucified. Know ye not that you were crucified with Him? Paul said, I have been crucified with Christ. No longer live I, it is Christ who lives in me.

And now I live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. In other words, you'll find when Christ died on the cross as a man, you and I, as human beings, we were crucified with Him.

The I, the old I, your I, my I, all the I's were crucified with Him on the cross. And be done with. Now, that is what the Lord has done on the cross to save our souls.

He has done it. But because He has done it, therefore the Holy Spirit today is to apply the cross into our lives. To make dead that self-life.

So that it will become a reality in us. And when the Holy Spirit is applying the cross to our self-life, then you'll find in the measure of self being decreased, Christ be increased in us. That's transformation.

Your old character began to fall off. And a new character of Christ began to be formed in you. Until you are conformed to the image of Christ.

You know, that is the salvation of the soul. And here you'll find our Lord Jesus has done it. And all that needs to be done is on the finished Word of Christ, let the Holy Spirit do it in your life.

And this is a lifetime. Not a once-for-all process. Lifetime process.

From glory to... But, when the Holy Spirit is going to do this work of transforming your soul, you need to have your soul in a right... And that condition is you are not under. You know, when a person is under a guilty feeling, a guilty consciousness, all the work of God seems to be stopped. God does not have an entrance into your life.

Because you are under a guilt feeling. You know, you're wrapped up with yourself. You do not allow the Holy Spirit to work in you.

So to have our soul in a right state for the salvation of the soul coming to us, we need to have a soul without a guilty feeling. And that can only come. You know, that is very important.

A forgiving... A forgiven soul opens the door to the working of the Holy Spirit in transforming. A guilty soul shuts the door of God's Word. You know, when a person is under a guilty feeling, no matter what you say, it doesn't enter in.

It seems that you are bound up with yourself. And unfortunately you find how many of God's people today, God's people, living under a guilty... And that hinders their progress in the Lord. So we need to pray, forgive us our debt as we forgive our debt.

You know, once when the Holy Spirit convicted us of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, we came to the Lord Jesus. We confessed our sins. And His blood cleanses us.

He forgives us. He not only forgives us, He even forgets. You know, the Bible says in the New Covenant, He not only forgives, but He forgets.

All our past sins, all our past debts, you know what is debt? Debt is what you owe. In other words, it's omission. And what is sin? Sin is what you ask.

It is commission. So, whatever we commit, or whatever we omit, before we believe in the Lord Jesus now, nobody can count how much we have omitted, and how much we have committed. But thank God, when we come to Him, our Lord Jesus, He forgives us all, and not only forgives, but He literally forgets.

Now, if you want to remind Him again, He said, I don't remember. Now, that is how good is forgiveness. No, you know, it's a wonderful feeling, you know, to be forgiven.

Now, thank God for that. But, after we are forgiven, is it not true, that we continue to owe, and continue, and you find that our Lord Jesus used a parable. When Peter came to the Lord Jesus, in Matthew chapter 18, He said, My brother sinned against me seven times, isn't that enough to forgive? You know, to Peter, that is quite an accomplishment.

Because he has a quick temper, you know, and for a quick tempered person to forgive seven times that endurance, you know, I often think that it is actually Peter who offends his brother, and he thinks that his brother offends him. Because Peter's brother is Andrew, and Andrew is such a quiet, good fellow, you know, and that is always the case. You know, when you offend people, you are offended, and you think you are so kind and generous to forgive, and when you forgive seven times, you think, well, that's enough.

That's enough. So our Lord Jesus used a parable. He said, a servant, owe his master ten thousand talents, millions of dollars, and of course the master has every right to seize him, to sell him and all that he has, to repay, and actually even that cannot repay actually.

But he begged his master, and the master had compassion on him, and forgave him. All right, everything is clear. Then he went out, and he saw a fellow bondman that owed him only a hundred denarii, a few dollars, and he hold his neck and said, pay.

If you do not pay, go to jail. And when the master heard about it, the master called him back, and said, I have forgiven you all, and you do not forget. All right.

Go to jail, and you pay every penny. Now, in that parable, what is he saying? Forgive us our debts, as we forgive. Now, brothers and sisters, you have to see the difference here.

It is important. Before we are saved, you are forgiven without forgiving anybody. It is all grace.

Why? Because it is impossible for you to forgive. You know, we often say, to err is human, forgive is divine. In other words, forgive is divine, and you are not divine.

You cannot forgive. As human, you err. As human, you always ask people to pay back.

You know, you cannot forgive. It is impossible. So, if our forgiveness is based upon our forgiving people, we will never be forgiven.

Now, thank God that we are forgiven freely, without any condition. But, what is grace? Grace is not only something that comes to us freely. Grace is life.

When it comes upon us, it carries with it the same character. In other words, we who have been forgiven now have the life, the divine life of forgiving. Because we are God's children.

We have our father's character, disposition. So, as God's children, you will find forgiving is with condition. It says, forgive us our debts.

As with brothers and sisters, often times you find God's people, they ask for forgiveness, and yet they are constantly, continually under a guilty feeling, because those who owe them. They are still holding some evil feeling, hatred, against some brothers. And that is the reason why you will find they do not enjoy the liberty of forgiveness.

Now, this is very, very important, brothers and sisters. Today, our being forgiven is conditioned on our forgiving our brothers and sisters. Because the new life is in us.

The new nature of forgiving is in us. And we should not waste the grace. Brothers and sisters, if God's people know how to forgive one another.

You know, when God's people are together, as a family, it is almost unavoidable that there will be some omission and some condition. It's unavoidable. Sometimes you do something to your brother that you shouldn't do.

Other times, you owe your brother something that you ought to do. And these things happen all the time. And if we all hold these things and these debts, what will happen? You will find that the whole body is blocked.

Is blocked. There will be no fellowship, no flow of life. You know, and the whole body will enter into death.

Brothers and sisters, that is what's happening in the church today. And the Lord wants us to pray, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. We need to forgive that we may be forgiven.

And our brothers and sisters need to forgive that they may be forgiven. Then we will have that kind of situation that the Holy Spirit is free to work in our midst to do the work of transformation. And how He will forgive us our debts as we do.

And then the Lord continues to say, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us. You know, we have a physical need. Give us this day our daily bread.

We have a soulical need. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. But we also have a spiritual need.

Why? Because we have a spirit. A human spirit. A renewed spirit.

And the Holy Spirit dwells in our spirit. And our spirits need to be sound, clear, unblamish, happy, light. We need such a kind of spirit.

So our spirit has also a need. Unoppressed, free. And that's the reason why the Lord wants to pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us.

You know, brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus says, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Your temptation is ever. Because the world is under the reign of the tempter.

Satan is the tempter. And, of course, he tries to tempt people everywhere, on anything, in whatever time and place. Temptation is all around us.

And for this reason the Lord wants us to watch that we enter not. I do believe there are many temptations that we enter in unnecessarily because we do not. We do not watch.

You know, temptation comes from the enemy. God never tempts. And He is not tempted.

That is the Book of James. God never tempts anybody. And God is not tempted, cannot be tempted.

Temptation comes from the enemy. Now, what is temptation? Temptation is trying to draw out from you the lust. And when the lust of the flesh are being drawn, then it ends in sin.

Now, that's temptation. In other words, temptation always has an evil thought behind it. Satan tempts us that we may fall.

And, unfortunately, we have a fifth columnist within us. The lust. And that responds to the temptation.

Now, God does test us. God does not tempt us. But He tests us.

Now, that's the difference. When God tests a person, He is trying to draw out the grace that He has already brought into that person. So that when that grace is drawn out, it's strengthened and it glorifies God.

Now, that's temptation. So, let us know no mistake, that God never tempts us. Thank God.

Even though we live in a world full of temptations, but actually, if God does not permit, the tempter cannot tempt us. You know, everything is under God's control. So, that's the reason why in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, you'll find that you will not be tempted beyond that which you can bear.

In other words, God measures even your temptation. Now, sometimes we go out of measure because we stubbornly want to do that. And God will just be unnecessary.

But even so, you'll find God really measures our temptation. So, do not think you are tempted beyond that which you are able to bear. And when you endure for a period, He will open us.

You know, that is the grace of God. Even with temptation. But, the prayer here is not that.

The prayer is lead us not into temptation. How does God lead us into temptation? We say God does not tempt us. We say that God sometimes permit us to be tempted.

But does God lead us into temptation? Why should we pray such a prayer? I can think of only two reasons why sometimes God leads us into temptation. One reason is God is so confident of us that He dares to challenge us. You know, in the case of Job, Satan came before him.

And Satan was not accusing yet. And probably Satan did not know how to accuse. You know, sometimes Satan didn't know how to accuse.

Unfortunately, most of the time he knows where to accuse. But, Job was such a perfect man. Satan watched him, watched him.

But he couldn't find any loophole to attack. So you find he didn't come to the Lord to accuse. To accuse Job.

He didn't. God challenged him. God said, now did you notice My servant Job there's no one perfect like he is? And then Satan tried to get permission.

You know, and God, Satan, Satan thought that must be the reason. It is because, he said, God, you build a hedge around him. You bless him.

Bless everything in his hand. And no wonder he fears you. Now take away all these things and he will curse you.

God said, alright. I challenge you. You do that.

No. Here you'll find it is God who leads him into temptation. But of course, the outcome, you know, God's name is on it.

When all these things are taken away, and even when he was stricken with swords, God did stop it. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Now, here.

You know, God is glorified. Satan's mouth is shut forever. Now, that is the case.

So sometimes, now I, I wonder how many of us God is able to do that. I don't know. But sometimes, you know, God really can do that.

Because he has confidence. Now that's one reason. Another reason is, sometimes he leads us into temptation.

Because there is something in us, some weakness in us, that we are unaware. And there is no way to teach us, but by leading us. Now the case of Simon Peter is one.

You know, Simon Peter said, Lord, I will die with you. I love you. I will die with you.

Other people may fall. Not me. And he leads him.

He believes it. He does not know and how is the Lord going to teach him. If the Lord said to him, and the Lord did, he said, you will deny me three times? Peter said, no, never.

Teaching doesn't work. So the Lord leads him to temptation. You know, he was tempted.

And when he was so tempted, his witness was revealed. And because of that, and in repentance, he was strengthened. What is of Peter fell off.

What is of the Holy Spirit? Now, brothers and sisters, this is why sometimes the Lord does lead us. That we may learn some lessons we can never learn otherwise. But we still need to pray.

Lead us not into temptation. Do not be so self-conceited. You know, if anyone thinks that he can stay, then beware that you fall.

You know, some people think, oh, I'm strong. God can use me to challenge the enemy. I have no weakness.

Well, better be humble and fearful. Lead us not into temptation. Lord, you know my frailty.

You know my weakness. Lest I fall, don't allow, lead us not into temptation. Lord, we need you.

Maintain me. That is the proof. Deliver us from the evil one.

If it is your will, that I have to go through the temptation, then Lord, you know, I cannot do it. But you have to do it. And thank God.

You know, our Lord Jesus said, Simon, Simon. Satan has demanded of you, to sit you as wheat in a sieve, that your faith shall not fail. And after you are recovered, brothers and sisters, how we need to ask the Lord to deliver us.

Remember, we are no match. But our Lord Jesus is. He has overcome.

And therefore, even in temptation, now that will keep our spirit in good. So we have the need of the Holy Spirit. And we need to pray this prayer.

Not only for ourselves, for the whole church. The whole church. And as we pray, you'll find how wonderfully.

This is the prayer that our Lord Jesus. And may the Lord help us. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank Thee that Thou has taught us.

We give ourselves to Thee. We are willing to be that Thou mayst be able to pray. Thy name be hallowed.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. To this day our needs lead us not into. For Thine is the kingdom.

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