

Introduction:

As we conclude our focus on prayer, we want to apply what we have learned. As we examine the kinds of prayers, we will incorporate some songs as well as some prayers that specifically correspond with aspects of prayer we are studying. In this lesson, we will divide prayer into three kinds. We will examine the prayer of Adoration, of Confession and of Supplication.

Discussion:

I. The Prayer of Adoration

- A. "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You" (**I Chronicles 29:10-15**).
- B. Adoration is not a duty to check off our worship list. Adoration is the natural response to God from His child who knows how truly awesome, amazing and all-mighty He is. God is worthy of adoration as the elders in **Revelation 4:9-11** demonstrated. Why is He worthy? Because He is the Holy God. Because He is the powerful Creator. Because He is the righteous Judge. Because He is the loving Redeemer. Because He is our merciful Benefactor. Because He is, as Paul said in **I Timothy 1:17**, "the King eternal, immortal, invisible...God who alone is wise."
- C. We typically subdivide adoration into thanksgiving and praise. Praise is honoring God for what He is and what He can do. Thanksgiving is acknowledging God for what He has done or for what we are absolutely convinced He is going to do. To illustrate the difference. We praise God because He is merciful and His lovingkindness endures forever. We thank God because in His mercy He sent His Son to die for us as the sacrifice that washes our sins away.
- D. We could take a great deal of time discussing all the reasons we need to adore God in prayer. However, I want us to especially note the second most important reason. The first reason is, of course, we praise God because He deserves it (*cf.* **Psalms 96:8**). The second most important reason is that we need to adore God in order to give us the proper perspective. Look at David's perspective in that prayer of adoration from **I Chronicles 29**. It gives us the proper perspective on who God is and who we are. It gives us the proper perspective on our relationship with God. Finally, because most of us spend most of our prayer time in supplication, asking for things, we spend most of our time thinking about what God has not done for us yet. Adoration gives us the proper perspective on what God has already done for us as we count our blessings.
- E. Allow me to offer you some advice for offering prayers of adoration. First, you must actually adore God. You must love Him and realize how great He is. You can only do that through Bible study. When you actually turn to praise and thank God, do not simply focus your mind on the material, recognize the spiritual blessings as well. Your house and car are great, but they will perish in the end. Forgiveness in Christ is greater and will go with you to judgment. Additionally, be specific. Too often our thanksgiving in prayer is limited to, "Thank you for our many physical and spiritual blessings." Which ones? List them. I love listening to children pray, because they can get specific and they can be thorough. Have you ever heard a little child thank God for their house, their bed, their doll, their teddy bear, their Mommy and Daddy, their grandparents, their brothers and sisters, their friend Susie, Billie, Cody, Bailey, Liam, ... Perhaps we can learn from them. But for all the advice I can give you, the best piece of advice to help you adore God in prayer is just simply to do it. Praise God. Thank God. Honor God. Bless God. Adore God.

II. The Prayer of Confession

- A. "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and Your judgment. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day...O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets...O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name" (**Daniel 9:4-19**).
- B. Wow, what a confession. The Greek word translated "confess" (*homologeō*) literally means "same word." That is, it means we are saying the same thing as someone else. In the case of spiritual issues, confession means to say the same thing about something that God does. When we make the good confession about Jesus, we are saying that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who died and was resurrected. We are saying the same thing about Him that the Father does. When we confess our sins, we are to say the same things about our sins that God does. This corresponds interestingly with repentance. Repentance literally means to think through again. True confession follows true repentance. In other words, we have, through our actions, said one thing about sin. We have said that it is alright. It is minor. It is justifiable. It is fun. However, having thought through these sins again, we come to see things differently. Then we begin to say about sin the same thing that God does. Finally, we ask God for forgiveness. However, we do so as Daniel did, not because we deserve it through our righteous deeds. Rather, we do so because of God's great mercies.
- C. If we are going to say the same thing about sin that God does, what are we going to say? Think about Daniel's prayer. We are not going to pull any punches. We are not going to mitigate. We are not going to qualify. We are not going to justify. We are not going to soften. We are not going to blame. Allow me to ask you. Don't you get tired of your kids or your spouse coming to you and saying, "I am sorry I did such and such but when you do that I just have a hard time stopping myself."? If we get tired of that sorry kind of weak confession and apology, don't you think God gets tired of it too? If we are going to confess, then let's really confess. Let's say about our sins what God really says about it. We must understand sin is not a mistake. It is not bad judgment. It is not an indiscretion. It is not a character flaw. It is wicked rebellion against God that cannot be justified no matter our circumstances.
- D. Allow me to offer you some prayer advice as you turn to God to confess your sins. First, be honest with yourself and with God. If you took the Lord's name in vain, do not confess to a slip of the tongue, confess to blasphemy. If you lusted, do not confess to wandering eyes, confess to adultery in your heart. Second, be specific. I do not know what your prayers of confession at home are like. However, in the assembly, our prayers of confession are usually limited to, "Father, please forgive us of our sins." If the prayer is really into oratory, he will pray, "Father forgive us of our sins whether they be sins of omission or commission." We do need to be specific. Why? I can tell you from personal experience of the time it dawned on me that I prayed every night for my sins to be forgiven, but rarely stopped to consider what I really needed forgiveness for. Because I had not thought about that, I had never thought about what I was going to do not to commit those same sins the next day. This leads to our next piece of advice. According to **Proverbs 28:13**, confession only does us any good if we forsake the sin. Confess it because you are giving it up. Finally, remember what Jesus said in His model prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." If we are not willing to forgive those who confess to us, we might as well not even try confessing to God.
- E. David said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (**Psalms 32:1**). What a privilege God has given us in confession.

III. The Prayer of Supplication

- A. "O Lord God of Israel, the one who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone" (**II Kings 19:15-19**).
- B. I can understand why the almighty God allows us to come into His presence and adore Him. I can understand why the holy God allows us to come into His presence and confess how far short of His holiness we are. What amazes me is that this same holy, almighty God allows us to come into His presence and request Him to use His might on our behalf. Even more than that, I am amazed that He allows us to come into His presence as though we have some special connection with Him and ask Him to use His might on behalf of others.
- C. **Matthew 7:7-11** is an absolutely phenomenal passage. "Ask, and it will be given to you." Why? Because our God is a good Father who wants to give good gifts to His children. The passage concludes saying, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" God wants to bless us, but many of His blessings are conditional on asking. **James 4:2** said that many do not receive blessings simply because they do not ask. For instance, God wants to give us wisdom, but we have to ask (**James 1:5**). God wants to forgive us, but we have to ask (**I John 1:9**). How many of God's gifts go unopened because God's children simply did not ask?
- D. Allow me to offer some advice as we turn to God to petition Him on our own behalf or intercede on another's behalf. First, **James 4:3** demonstrates that we must not be selfish. When we make a request, we need to consider why we are asking. The ultimate goal of all our requests must be for the benefit of serving others and glorifying God. Be specific. First, because most of our general prayers really cannot be prayed with any kind of faith. Consider, "Lord, heal the sick the world over." While I am certain we all believe God can do that, do any of us really believe He will? Of course not. In fact, just the opposite, most of us believe that He won't because we know that is just not how He works. Further, we must learn to be observant. If we are going to intercede for others, we have to pay attention to what are their needs. Finally, as we have said repeatedly, be willing to offer yourself as part of the answer to your prayer.
- E. Whatever we do, we must never take the privilege of supplication for granted. We can cast our cares on God because He cares for us (**I Peter 5:7**). We, however, do not deserve any of this. Therefore, we must follow Paul's advice in **Philippians 4:6**, letting our requests be made known to God with thanksgiving. Never forget to take this prayer back full circle to where we began with adoration and thanksgiving.

Conclusion:

Indeed, prayer is the greatest privilege the Father offers us. We must remember that it is not a toy. We must never approach it rashly. However, we can be thankful that through the blessing of Jesus' Christ death, we are allowed to come into the presence of God. As the Hebrew writer exhorts us, let us always draw near to God and pray (**Hebrews 10:19-22**).