

The Model Prayer

📖 Matthew 6:9-15

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Tonight we return to Matthew 5-7, and within that we come to Matthew 6:9-13 which is the most well-known prayer in the Bible, commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer but in reality the Model Prayer. This is not a prayer that Jesus could pray but it does include the principles Jesus employed in His own prayer life. Before we unfold the prayer let's get the context by asking, "What is the issue in Matthew 5-7?" Righteousness! Matthew 5:20, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of God. The nation needed a certain quality of righteousness to enter the kingdom. This righteousness had two aspects. What's the first aspect? Teaching. And what do we find in Matthew 5:21-48? Jesus' teaching of righteousness as contrasted to the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. What's the difference? Internal vs external. In 6:1 Jesus turns to the second aspect. What's the second aspect? Practice. And what do we find in Matt 6:1-18? Jesus taking the three chief acts of piety in 1st century Judaism and contrasting true righteous practices with the practices of the scribes and Pharisees. What's the difference? Motive. What's your motive in giving alms, praying and fasting. So Jesus is concerned in chapter 5 with teaching righteousness and in chapter 6 with practicing righteousness.

Remember, we are looking at Israel and they are the covenant people of God. They have the Abrahamic Covenant and this establishes their ultimate position in the kingdom in the land, with the seed and a global blessing. But they also had the Mosaic Covenant and this established their enjoyment of the promised blessings in the land, with the seed and a global blessing. What was the individual requirement for kingdom entrance? Imputed righteousness. How do you get imputed righteousness? Faith, it was always faith. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Therefore Abraham, who died without seeing the promises, must be resurrected to enjoy the promises. What are the national requirements for kingdom entrance? Practical righteousness. How do you get practical righteousness? Living by faith, it was always by trusting the word of God and thereby obeying the word of God. So one generation had to demonstrate loyalty to God. Who are the disciples here? Jesus' disciples. He called them out to teach practical righteousness and also to practice righteousness

according to the Law of Moses. Why? So that they, with Jesus, could lead the nation into a practical righteousness that surpassed that of the scribes and Pharisees so that generation could enter the kingdom. The King had arrived, the kingdom offer was on the table. John the Baptist had gone before the King to prepare the way for His arrival and many had come out and were being baptized. Jesus Himself was baptized to identify with John and his message of the 'at hand' kingdom. Then John was arrested and so Jesus departed into the Galilee because it was not His time. Then He called His first four disciples; Peter, Andrew, James and John, they were in training to be fishers of men. In the Sermon on the Mount what is He essentially doing? Commissioning them to be the new leadership of Israel in light of the defunct leadership of the scribes and Pharisees. What was the problem with the scribes and the Pharisees? They had distorted the true interpretation of the Law of Moses and taught others to practice the same. If that generation continued to follow their teachings and practices then their practical righteousness would not be sufficient for kingdom entrance. Therefore Jesus and His disciples were teaching and practicing a righteousness that was sufficient for kingdom entrance. So there are two big issues. First, that generation's righteousness. They needed a righteousness consistent with the Law of Moses and that was the righteousness Jesus was teaching and practicing. Only if that generation had a righteousness that surpassed that of the scribes and Pharisees and received Jesus as their King would they enter the kingdom. Second, that generation's repentance. They needed to repent of the teachings and practices of the scribes and Pharisees and follow Jesus, become His disciples. And if they would they would receive their King, enthrone Him and the kingdom would come.

Alright, we come to the verse by verse to 6:1-18 and what's the basic idea Jesus is condemning? Motives. The scribes and Pharisees practices came from the wrong motives. The scribes and Pharisees had three chief acts of piety; giving alms to the needy, praying and fasting. What was their motive in these practices? To be noticed by men. Yet if that was their motive then they were not noticed by God. The point was not to be noticed by men but to be noticed by God. Worship is not directed toward men but toward God. Otherwise it's not worship. So in 6:2-4 He applies the principle of right motives in worship to the first issue, the giving of alms. Was there anything wrong with the giving of alms? No, it was not even wrong to give alms publicly. It was commanded by the Law. What was wrong with the way they were doing it? Again, they simply did it in order to be noticed by men; to receive honor from men. What did Jesus insist the Law required? That they give alms without thought of return. Letting your left hand not know what your right hand was doing. If they gave in this fashion then Jesus says your Father in heaven will reward you greatly in the coming kingdom. By secondary application we in the Church will be rewarded for giving without thought of return. In 6:5-15 He applies the principle of right motives in worship to the second issue; prayer. Was there anything wrong with prayer? No, there was everything right about it, even public prayer. Prayer is a form of worship. What was wrong then? Again they were praying in order to be noticed by men. They made a great show of themselves on the

street corners and in the synagogues so everyone would notice them. What did Jesus insist was the right way to pray? To pray to God, thinking only of Him as their audience. What they were doing was following pagan practices by babbling repetitively and going on and on because they thought this would move God to answer their prayers. That was not so because you cannot manipulate God into answering your prayers. Why can't you do that? Because God already knows your prayers before you ever open your mouth because He is omniscient. And therefore He knows what you need and He's not going to give you what you don't need. So no amount of praying for what you don't need will move Him to give you what you don't need. So praying as if we can move Him is not the way to pray.

How should we pray? That's what Jesus teaches us in vv 9-13, what most call the Lord's Prayer but I call the Model Prayer. There are seven observations we want to make about the prayer before we look at the details of the prayer. First, the prayer was given against the background of the prayers of the scribes and Pharisees. Their prayers were lengthy, ostentatious and repetitive. Jesus is saying prayer should not be that way. This prayer is simple, concise and to the point. Jesus wants His disciples to pray simple, concise and to the point prayers. Since God already knows what you need before you ask then it is worthless to try to move Him to answer your prayers by being lengthy, ostentatious and repetitive. Pray simply, pray concisely and pray to the point. That is Jesus' point. Second, the prayer was not given to be repeated but rather to teach us how to pray. This prayer is the most repeated prayer in all of Christendom but Jesus does not say "pray this," He says, "pray in this way." To pray this over and over falls very near to the trap the scribes and Pharisees had fallen into, meaningless repetition. Repeating a prayer over and over runs the risk of not thinking about the content of the prayer. For example, tour guides often repeat the same thing day after day. I once heard a tour guide say that while they are repeating the program they are thinking of something entirely different, what they have to do later that day, what they are going to have for dinner. Once a prayer has gotten to that point it has obviously lost all its value. How would you like to be God and hear the same prayer every day from a person who is thinking about something else entirely? I think God would just say, shut up, I'm not interested. So the prayer was not given to be repeated. Third, the prayer has six petitions, the first three are 'Thy,' 'Thy,' 'Thy' and the last three are 'us,' 'us,' 'us.' It is obvious that the one praying in this way puts God's interests before his own interests. "Hallowed be Thy name," "Thy kingdom," and "Thy will" come before "Give us," "forgive us," and "deliver us." So the person who follows Jesus' model of prayer shows that he has a greater concern for God's interests than his own interests. This does not mean that he has no interests to pray for but simply that God's interests are more important than his own. The fourth observation is that prayer is essentially "asking God for something" and not merely "talking to God" as is commonly taught. All six Greek words for prayer in the NT have as their essential component, "asking." Prayer is not just talking to God; prayer is asking God for something. There may be other elements within a prayer but they are not the prayer itself. Jesus' prayer illustrates this truth since the entire

prayer is one of requests to the Father. The fifth observation is that every request in the prayer relates to the kingdom. Some are obvious such as "Thy kingdom come." But, in fact, every petition, even "Hallowed be Thy name," relates to the kingdom. The first three requests relate to the desire for the kingdom to come; the last three requests relate to the needs of the Jews just prior to the kingdom's arrival. In OT thought the kingdom's arrival would be preceded by the time of Jacob's trouble, what we know as the great tribulation. During that great tribulation Israel will face its greatest persecution ever. They will have great needs in that time. Thus the prayers to give us, forgive us and deliver us all relate directly to that time of great need. The sixth observation is that the kingdom had not come. Despite that all kingdom-now theology's such as Amillennialism, Covenant Premillennialism and Progressive Dispensationalism claim that the kingdom came in the Life and Ministry of the Messiah, this passage indicates that the kingdom had not come. In point of fact the kingdom had come near and was 'at hand' because the King had arrived, but the kingdom had not come in any sense. The prayer is for the kingdom to come from heaven to earth. That it was in heaven is obvious. There has always been God's eternal reign in heaven. But the prayer is that His heavenly reign would come to earth. The seventh observation is that all the verbs are aorist imperatives. Without exception, "hallowed," "come," "be done," "give," "forgive" and "deliver" are all aorist imperatives. The aorist imperative expresses a sense of urgency. The sense of urgency supports the contention that the content of these requests all relate to the nearness of the kingdom. Since the kingdom is no longer near then we can pray in this way but the sense of urgency as it relates to the kingdom is not applicable.

With those seven observations let's look in detail starting with verse 9. In verse 9 Jesus says, **Pray, then, in this way:** that is, in light of the wrong manner of prayer practiced by the scribes and Pharisees which was done to be noticed by men and get men's approval and thus was very lengthy, ostentatious and repetitive, how should they pray? **In this way.** Jesus is not telling them *what* to pray but *how* to pray. Glasscock says, "This pericope is often referred to as "the Lord's prayer" but is better designated as a sample prayer..."¹ There are several good elements in the sample prayer that both they and we should incorporate into our prayer. First, to whom should prayer be addressed? To **Our Father who is in heaven.** Put another way, prayers should be offered to the **Father** and not to the Son or to the Spirit. Often churches have a liturgy of three prayers. The first one is to the Father, the second one is to the Son, the third one is to the Spirit. However, this violates what Jesus said when He said all prayer should be offered to the **Father.** Another issue in our day is that we should not think of God as a "Mother." Many in the church today are referring to God as Mother because they think the concept of God as Father was patriarchally driven. However, this shows that these people do not believe that the Bible is the self-revelation of God. Since we believe that the Bible is the self-revelation of God and God never refers to Himself as Mother but always as masculine and as Father then we conclude that there is something about thinking of God in masculine terms as Father that is necessary to a right

understanding of Him. If we think of God as Mother then our image of Him will in some way be marred. Constable says, "The way we think of God as we pray to Him is very important. In prayer we should remember that He is a loving Father who will respond as such to His children. Some modern individuals advocate thinking of God as our Mother. However this runs contrary to what Jesus taught and to the thousands of references to God that God has given us in the masculine gender in both Testaments. God is not a sexual being. Nevertheless He is more like a father to us than a mother. Thinking of Him primarily as a mother will result in some distortion in our concept of God. It will also result in some confusion in our thinking about how God relates to us and how we should relate to Him."² Next Jesus designates the **Father** as the One **who is in heaven**. **Father...in heaven** designates Him as transcendent. Transcendent means that the **Father** is not a part of the created order but distinct from it. It does not mean that God is not omnipresent for even Solomon, after having built the Temple, in his dedicatory prayer says, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kgs 8:27). The statement therefore does not mean the Father is contained in a little box in heaven. It rather designates Him as transcendent and therefore not a part of His creation. The Father is above His creation and distinct from it. So the first point is that prayer should be addressed to the transcendent Father. He is over all and therefore able to answer our prayer.

With the second point in prayer we come to the three requests related to God's interests. The first is a request for God's name being revered. Jesus says, **Hallowed be Your name**. The word **Hallowed** in the Greek is *αγιαζω* and means "set apart" or "holy." Since the Father is intrinsically holy this request is that His **name** would be revered as holy. One's **name** refers to one's reputation so the presupposition behind the prayer is that God's reputation was in a state of disrepute at the time. Several OT passages indicate that when Israel lost her kingdom and went into captivity the name of God fell into disrepute because the nations perceived Israel's God as inferior to their gods (Isa 29:23; 43:25; 48:11; Ezek 36:20-23). As an example, Ezek 36:23 states of the future kingdom, "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight." So the prayer **Hallowed be Your name** is in line with the OT promises of God to restore the kingdom. When the kingdom is restored the name of God will be restored. All these prayer requests relate to the kingdom. Allen says, "Only when the 'kingdom' came would God's name be wholly sanctified in the final redemption of His people from reproach."³ Since the verb is an aorist imperative then it has a sense of urgency to it. The Israeli who prayed this prayer was eager for God's reputation to be restored before the world. Thus he was eager for the kingdom to come because as long as the kingdom is not come then God's name is not being revered among the nations.

So far the points we learn about prayer are that prayer should be addressed to whom? The transcendent Father. And prayer should desire what concerning God's name? That it be revered in the world.

The second request is verse 10. **Your kingdom come.** Since the verb is in the aorist imperative just like every other verb in the prayer then if the kingdom had already come, like all kingdom now theology's insist, then we also have to say that God's name was being hallowed, God's will was being done, Israel had their daily bread, was forgiven of all their debts and was delivered from the evil one. Since such a conclusion is ludicrous it's clear that the kingdom had not come. Burrows says, "Those who maintain that for Jesus himself the kingdom of God had already come in his own person and ministry inevitably treat this second petition of the Lord's prayer in a rather cavalier fashion."⁴ This cavalier running roughshod over the text that blends the kingdom with the present is severely disruptive to biblical truth. The truth is that the kingdom was being offered and if the nation Israel would repent of the doctrines and practices of the scribes and Pharisees and follow Jesus' doctrines and practices the kingdom would come. It was a legitimate offer and that legitimate offer is reflected in the prayer **Thy kingdom come.** Such a focus shows that one is putting God's interests above his own personal interests. Ultimately this request is connected to the prior request because only when the kingdom comes will the Father's name be properly revered.

The third request in verse 10 again relates to the kingdom. **Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.** This request clearly illustrates a distinction within the will of God. First, there is the will of God as it is carried out in heaven and second there is a petition that the will of God be carried out on earth as it is in heaven. The distinction within the will of God then is that God's will is always being carried out in heaven but not on earth. The prayer is that it would be carried out on earth in the same fashion that it is being carried out in heaven. Very clearly then the **will** of God here is with respect to sin. The will of God in heaven is no sin and so there is no sin. The presence of God's kingdom rule in heaven prevents sin. But on earth at present there is much sin. So the prayer that God's **will be done on earth as it is in heaven** means that God's kingdom rule come upon earth as it is in heaven such that sin is kept in check. This will be answered in the millennium. McClain says, "This difference [between God's heavenly universal rule and His earthly millennial rule] arises out of the fact that rebellion and sin exist upon the earth, sin which is to be dealt with in a way not known in any other spot in the universe, not even among the angels which sinned. It is here that the great purpose of what I have named the Mediatorial Kingdom appears: On the basis of mediatorial redemption it must 'come' to put down at last all rebellion with its evil results, thus finally bringing the Kingdom and will of God on earth as it is in heaven."⁵ Interestingly, a non-dispensationalist Millar Burrows sees accurately the meaning of this passage and while not believing it says this, "Jesus' conception of God's kingdom is not simply that of the universal sovereignty of God, which may or may not be accepted by men but is always there. That is

the basis of his conception, but he combines with it the eschatological idea of the kingdom which is still to come. In other words, what Jesus means by the kingdom of God includes what the rabbinic literature calls the coming age.⁶ The rabbi's saw only two ages, the present age and the coming age. The coming age was Messianic. It was God's rule through the Messiah. The aorist imperative, again, signals an urgent plea. McClain says, "In each of the petitions concerning God's name, kingdom, and will, the Greek verb is not only in the emphatic position but also aorist imperative in form, thus indicating "single or instantaneous" action. Thus, in harmony with all Old Testament prophecy, the prayer taught by our Lord suggests not only that His kingdom is to be prayed for, but also that its coming to the "earth" will be a definite crisis in history, not a long and gradual process of evolution."⁷ McClain's point is well-perceived. When the kingdom comes it will appear suddenly. Jesus said His coming would not come with signs to be observed but would be like lightning when it flashes out of one part of the sky and shines to the other part of the sky (Luke 17:22-24). This is what it means when Jesus said the kingdom of God is in your midst; that is, it will arrive so suddenly that it will just be there. It will not come over a protracted period of time.

Summing up the first three petitions to the Father all three have a kingdom focus. First, **Hallowed be Thy name** is a request that God's reputation be restored to its place of reverence in the kingdom. Until that time the nations profane His name. When He restores His people in the kingdom this prayer will be answered and His name will no longer profaned among the nations (cf Ezek 39:7). Second, **Thy kingdom come** is a request that the Messianic kingdom come upon the earth. That kingdom did not come in the person and ministry of the Messiah, it only came near in Him. When He comes the second time this prayer will be answered and the kingdom will actually arrive. Third, **Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven** is a request that the will of God as it is continually being done in the universal kingdom of God in heaven be exercised upon the earth in the coming Messianic kingdom. When He comes the second time this prayer will be answered and God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. All three of these requests place God's interests before the petitioner's interests.

We now turn to Matt 6:11-13 where the petitioner's interests are put forth. They also relate to the kingdom in that the OT taught that a time of great difficulty would face Israel just before the kingdom came. In light of the great difficulty these three requests are made. The first request relates to physical needs. **Give us this day our daily bread** is not limited in Scripture to food but is commonly a reference to all our physical needs (cf Prov 30:8; 2 Thes 3:12). Even in our culture **bread** is considered "the staff of life." It thereby stands for all physical needs and not luxuries. The prayer is for needs, not greed's! The fact that the request says **this day** reflects 1st century life when a worker received his pay for that day at the end of the day. Of course it also reminds us that we are dependent upon Him every day and to live one day at a time, however, that dependence was more keenly felt by those in the 1st century who depended each day upon receiving pay in order to have their needs met. Such needs will really be felt

during the time of great tribulation just prior to the kingdom's arrival. Of course, praying for God to **Give us this day our daily bread** is not a license to not work and pray that God will give state support to you by way of a welfare program. God also created our bodies with the ability to work and earn a living and Paul said to the lazy believers at Thessalonica, "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either" (cf 2 Thess 3:10). The bottom line is that the prayer needs to be understood in the sense of expressing dependence upon Him for all physical needs.

The second request is verse 12 and relates to spiritual needs. **And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** The Greek word **debt** does not refer to financial debt but spiritual debt. The Greek word probably comes from the Aramaic *hoba* which was a common synonym for sins. M'Neile says, "The thought of sins...as debts was thoroughly Jewish..." The sins being referred to here are sins that separate one from fellowship with God, not relationship. The assumption is that they already have a relationship with God by grace through faith but there is still the daily need for restoration of fellowship with God through confession. His disciples were to be spiritually prepared for the coming kingdom and this involved being in fellowship with God. The petitioner had already forgiven those who had spiritually sinned against them and is only asking that God do the same for him. In other words, he has a proper evaluation of his own sin. As one author pointed out, "Once our eyes have been opened to see the enormity of our offense against God, the injuries which others have done to us appear by comparison extremely trifling. If, on the other hand, we have an exaggerated view of the offenses of others, it proves that we have minimized our own."⁸ I see that as an extremely insightful comment. If you can't forgive others for all the little things they do to offend you then how can you expect God to forgive you for the enormity of your offenses? That's being short-sighted, don't you think? This principle will be explained further in vv 14-15 but the important thing to realize now is that he's not saying that God's forgiveness of us is based on our forgiveness of others. He's saying that when we don't forgive others for the little offenses but still expect God to forgive us for our big offenses we're off base in our thinking. We don't really have a good evaluation of ourselves and our sin, always pointing out the sins of others all the while not removing the beam in our own eye that so blinds us to our own failures. People who have trouble forgiving others really have a very shallow concept of God's forgiveness of them. It doesn't really register with them how bad they are. But they can sure tell you how bad everyone else is. Jesus is condemning that outlook here. They should take a step back and reconsider their own sin and God's forgiveness before pointing the finger.

The third request is verse 13 and relates to temptation. **And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** Some think this is two requests but it is really two sides of the same request. On one side, **do not lead us into temptation** and on the other **but deliver us from evil.** On the first side we must recollect that James 1:13 teaches that "God does not tempt anyone." Therefore the prayer to **not lead us into temptation** must mean something else. The something else it means is that God

would restrain Satan's opportunities to tempt us to sin. Clearly from Job 1-2 God can limit and restrain Satan's activity in our lives. As such Jesus is saying they we're to pray that God would restrain Satan's tempting activity that so often causes us to stumble into sin. This is an important prayer that recognizes that Satan is a true personality who is given the opportunity to tempt but reminds us that even God is greater than Satan and can restrain his opportunities to tempt. On the other side we find the strong contrast, **but deliver us from evil**. The debate is whether **evil** refers to "evil in general" or to "the evil one." When the Greek preposition *απο* is used after **deliver** it usually refers to deliverance from a person. Thus it probably refers to deliverance from Satan, the evil one. The Old Testament predicted that a time of great evil would precede the establishment of the kingdom (Jer. 30). Some commentators, including non-premillenarians, have understood the evil in this petition as a reference to Satanic opposition that will come to its full force before the kingdom begins."⁹ This is most definitely my view. At the mid-point of the Tribulation Satan will be cast out of heaven and he will become enraged at Israel. At that time his fury will be unparalleled in human history. He will personally indwell the anti-Christ and go on a rampage to destroy Israel. The temptation will be great to defect from the truth and join the anti-Christ for a time until persecution lifts. Rather than defecting they should pray that God would deliver them from Satanic opposition. Of course, there is always secondary application to us but the main intent is in an 'at hand' kingdom context.

Summing up the second three petitions to the Father all three have a focus on needs just prior to the kingdom. First, **give us this day our daily bread** is a request for physical needs in light of the difficulties that will attend the great tribulation just before the kingdom. Second, **and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors** is a request for spiritual forgiveness in light of their forgiveness of others whose sins are really minor relative to their sins against God. They will want to walk in fellowship in order to be spiritually prepared for the kingdom. Third, **and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil** is really one request with two sides. The request is for God to restrain Satan's opportunities to tempt us from sin and thereby deliver them from the evil one whose fury prior to the kingdom's arrival will be unparalleled.

The popular close to the prayer at the end of verse 13 is in brackets because it is not in the original text but is a scribal addition made to serve a liturgical use of the prayer. The manuscript evidence has great variation. Some lack "the kingdom and," and others lack "the power and," and some read, "for thine is the power forever" and others expand "forever" into "forever and ever," and most of them add, "Amen." Several late manuscripts add a trinitarian reference, "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit forever. Amen." The earliest and best manuscripts do not contain these additions. This lack, as Bruce Metzger says, is evidence "that an ascription, usually in a threefold form, was composed...in order to adapt the Prayer for liturgical use in the early church."¹⁰

Verses 14-15 expand what was meant by the petition in verse 12 concerning **forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**. The take away, once we understand that debts refer to sins as is clear from verse 14 which replaces the word debts with **transgressions** and not financial debts, is not to be short-sighted with respect to our own sins. If we expect God to forgive us of our sins but we're not forgiving others of their sins then we have a very weak view of our own sins. The point is not to condition our forgiveness by God on our forgiveness of others but to say that we are not looking at our own sin correctly when we are charging everyone else with sin.

In conclusion, Toussaint aptly says, "The first three requests are petitions for the coming of the kingdom. The last three are for the needs of the disciples in the interim preceding the establishment of the kingdom."¹¹ In the end, if His disciples truly wanted to follow Him as their Master they would reject the manipulative man-pleasing prayer practices of the scribes and Pharisees and follow the prayer practices of Jesus. This meant praying simple, concise and to the point prayers, putting God's interests before their own. Since God's purposes are to establish His kingdom on earth then their desire would be for the kingdom to be established. When the kingdom is established they will have the answer to their first petition, that God's name would be hallowed, their second petition, that the kingdom would have arrived, and their third petition, that God's will would be done on earth as it relates to sin and righteousness as it was being done in heaven. As far as their interests were concerned prior to the establishment of the kingdom, their first request is for daily physical needs, their second request is for God's forgiveness of their sins so they have fellowship and their third request is for God's restraint of the evil one in his opportunities to tempt. The bracketed formula at the end of the prayer is not original but was added for liturgical reasons. This is clear from the great variety of endings evidenced in the manuscripts. The bottom line is that the way the scribes and Pharisees were praying was not meeting the righteous requirement of the Law. If the disciples would model their prayers after Jesus' suggestions and the nation would follow them then they would meet the righteous requirement of the Law and the kingdom would come.

What principles of prayer can we learn? First, in our prayers we should put God's interests above our own. The prayer is structured with Thy, Thy, Thy before us, us, us. So while our interests may be important His are always more important. In the prayer the interests are on God's kingdom coming to earth. In light of the rejection and postponement we live in the Church. In the Church how much value do we really put in our prayer on Christ completing His body at the Rapture so that the Church is glorified and our experience conforms to our position (Col 3:1-4). It seems to me that would take the kind of preeminence in our prayers that Jesus suggested would be appropriate for Israel's prayers for the kingdom. Second, all prayer is making requests to God. It is important to realize that prayer is not just talking to God. It's actually asking from God and when we are asking we are showing dependence. Prayer essentially is admitting dependence. So having a strong prayer life is important. Third, I wouldn't

worry so much about other people's sins but worry about your own. This does not mean turn a blind eye to sin. Public sin requires public confession just as private sins requires private confession. But what it means is that we can easily get so frustrated with someone else's sin that we have an unforgiving spirit and that's not the right spirit because our sins are much more offensive to God than others are to us. Fourth, the kingdom is not now but future. Jesus told them to pray for the kingdom to come and God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven and hallowed be God's name. The reason it is practical to realize the kingdom did not come is because if the kingdom did come then the church is the kingdom and now we confuse the church and the state. Historically every kingdom now theology has tried to wield its authority through the state. And when you get those two together it's only a matter of time before the church is beheading people for heresy. There is no kingdom now and it is dangerous to hold that it is... The church is the body of Christ, a spiritual organism, scattered throughout all worldly kingdoms carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ and eagerly expecting His any-moment arrival for us on the heels of which this prayer will once again find primary relevance for Israel. Let's not forget who we are, why we are here and how we are to live...

¹ Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 145.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 6:9.

³ Willoughby C. Allen, cited by Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 108.

⁴ Millar Burrows, cited by Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 109.

⁵ McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, p 35.

⁶ Burrows cited by Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 6:9. Burrows was a professor at Yale Divinity School and worked extensively on editing the Dead Sea scrolls manuscripts from Cave One, along with giving working names to several of the scrolls.

⁷ McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, p 36.

⁸ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 6:9.

⁹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 6:9.

¹⁰ Metzger, Bruce Manning, United Bible Societies. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.)*. London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994.

¹¹ McClain, *Behold the King*, p 112.