

Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Lecture 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer

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This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 10 on Matthew 6:1 and following, Works of Piety, Prayer.

Hey, before we move on to prayer, I just want to make sure because I may not have said something clearly.

I think the reward is well done, good and faithful servant. If I did not make that clear last session, I want to make it clear. That's the reward I'm looking for.

Having people thank me in heaven is going to be so cool. I'm looking forward to that. The joy of knowing that we're providing a free, world-class education to people around the world, and the reward is the joy of doing that with BT.

The reward that really matters to me is to hear the Lord say, well done. I do not want to hear, eh, okay, you did okay. I don't want that at all.

I mean, I'll take it, but it's not what I want to hear. I want to hear you did a good job. Give me a hug.

I want the picture. So anyway, if I didn't make that clear, I want to make that clear. Okay, we're going to go up to verse 5. Oh, yes, thank you.

Comments on fasting. Now you can fast things. Yeah.

I mean, yeah. I mean, fasting from consumerism. I mean, would that fit into that category that I said? Yeah.

Fasting from consumerism. I'm sorry. Well, certainly, the coffee bar at Whole Foods would have issues if we stopped, if we fasted from coffee and drank a lot of coffee.

Yeah. And so, no, I'm not familiar with that. Oh, I don't, I don't, I don't know.

I say a 50. It is. What is it? 58.

People said we fasted, and I've seen it. And God says, yeah, I'm going to tell you, if you're fasting, you do as you please. You exploit all the workers.

You fast against the law. And so forth. It's not this kind of fasting I've chosen.

It is a shame and injustice, Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

I'm, I'm going to have to think that I, Isaiah 15. Let me think through that. I can't do it now, but that's really expanding what a fast is.

And that's much more, and it includes the ideas of injustice and other things like that. Yeah. Let me I'll think that over.

Good point. Thank you. I was unaware of Isaiah 58 on that point.

Okay. Back on prayer. Thank you.

And when you pray, sorry, verse five, and when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Well, truly, I tell you, they have received the full reward. But when you pray, go into your room, and the King James has an inner room.

It's a Greek manuscript issue. The two words are identical except for one letter. And so, the Greek word, the King James, is using his inner room.

The room, the Greek that most of us follow, just says room, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your father who is unseen. And then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Let's, let's, we'll stop at verse six.

What is Jesus not teaching? Well, he's not prohibiting public prayer. It sounds like it, but contextually, there's no way he is. The disciples say, teach us to pray.

He says, our father, which is a corporate prayer. Jesus, Paul, and the other church all prayed very publicly. So that can't be the issue.

And I don't think the issue is so much necessarily where you pray again. Jesus prayed in a lot of different places. Ancient homes were open.

There were curtains, but they were basically open. There may have been one room with one door, and that was a storehouse. But basically, they were; they were wide open.

That way, there's not that much difference between the inner room and the room because there's probably only one. Yeah, well, yeah, that's, yeah, it's, that's not what he's saying. Now, is the concept of a prayer closet a good thing? Yeah, it's a very good thing.

But I don't think that's what's going on. I think the issue is consistent with the other acts of piety. Why do you pray, and to whom? Who is your audience? Whose praise do you desire? So, he's speaking to a specific historical audience.

He's trying to counteract this incredible arrogance that happens. I mean, the picture is that there were certain calls to time for prayer, calls to prayer, right? And so the idea is that the Pharisees would make sure they were on a busy street corner when they were so far blue to announce a time for prayer. So, they could be on a busy street corner so that everybody could see how eloquent their prayers could be.

There's, I don't have it in my notes, I can't get it just right, but there's a famous quote about a Boston preacher who said that that was the most eloquent prayer ever delivered to man. And that was the only audience it was delivered to, which was men. What is Jesus teaching? The main point, obviously, is we can't be hypocritical in our prayers.

We cannot be hypocritical in our prayers. A hypocritical prayer is someone who prays and forgets to whom he's praying, uses meaningless words and cliches that are repeated, using words that draw attention to the prayer. When I hear preachers switch into a preacher's voice to pray, it annoys me.

Dear Lord! Today, we're going to look at Matthew 5. Dear Lord! Thank you. The purpose of prayer is not to draw attention to us, and that should influence our mannerisms and how we pray. Simply, authentic prayer is speaking to God.

Not hypocritical prayer, which is addressed to man, but rather authentic prayer, which is the prayer that speaks to God. It's easier for me to get to the Old Testament on my phone. Sorry, just a second.

Psalms 27.8 is where I'm going. Bible drills. My heart says, if you seek his face, your face, Lord, I will seek.

That's prayer, right? That's the right kind of prayer. Prayer is speaking with God. It's not speaking to the human audience who is listening but to the God who is listening.

I think the best corrective to hypocritical public prayer is authentic private prayer. I think that's a quarrel's line. I'm not sure.

I think the best corrective to hypocritical public prayer is authentic private prayer. And public prayer should be an outflowing of our private prayer life. You, and when I used to, stand up on Sunday morning and pray.

Is that prayer just a natural extension of our discussions with God through the previous week? I think that's one of those checks in our spirit we should have. I don't

know how you go about preparing for your sermons. I used to, like I said, go into the church, and I found, speaking of private prayer closets, my wife has a closet, and she spends a lot of time in there.

Face to the ground, praying. She's a great prayer. For me, I loved praying in the worship center.

Not a sanctuary; that's Old Testament. Praying in the worship center. I loved starting a routine of prayers on Friday that would then go through Saturday so that when I stood up and there were people in the worship center on Sunday, it was just a natural outflowing of what had been happening in that room for the past several days.

Everyone has different ways to do this, right? But for me, that was a really helpful way to make sure that my public prayers were simply an outflowing of my private prayers that I had been doing the previous week. And if our prayers are not hypocritical, and if our prayers are truly authentic, they are to God, then there is a reward, right? It's what it says. Your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

And, as you can expect, where I'm going to go with this, like giving and like fasting, the end of the process is the reward. The greatest reward of prayer is communion with God. Just in ever-increasing ways, and I'm not speaking as someone who has a handle on this, so don't misread me, but the reward of prayer is in our increasing awareness of what it is to live in relationship and in communion with the Heavenly Father.

What else is there? It's the end of the process, which is, in fact, the reward. Now, there's another reward for prayer, and that's answered prayer. And certainly, as we pray and as God answers in ways that we can perceive His actions as a response to our prayers.

My wife's famous line is something. I forget what it was about, but it was something kind of bodacious for which she was praying, and God did it. And she looked at me, and she goes, Prayer works. You just got to do it, Bill.

When we went through our ministry kaboom, she called it, I just couldn't pray. I was angry, I was messed up, I just, I couldn't pray. And she was gently kind of nurturing and urging me to move forward, and that's why she'd say, Prayer works, Bill.

You just got to do it. He didn't answer my last prayer, so I'm not going to pray anymore. He didn't answer any prayers.

He does, Bill. You just may not like his answer. Yeah, I think the whole issue of unanswered prayer is such a gargantuan problem, and depending on our time allotment, hopefully, we can talk a little bit about it.

So anyway, that's the kind of the part on prayer that parallels the part on giving and the part on fasting. But then Jesus goes on, verse 7. The title in my notes is verses 7 and 8, which are the prayer and the character of God. The point that I want to make, the overall point I want to make, is how we pray, which shows our view of the character of God.

Someone told me that once, and it was one of the most annoying things. As I listen to my own prayers, it's annoying. And so, if misery loves company, I want you to be as miserable as I was in that process.

Your prayers and my prayers truly show our view of God. And that's a scary, scary thing. As I sit down and pray over a meal or when I say prayers for the kids before they go to sleep.

So, prayer and the character of God. When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they will think they will be heard because of their many words. Don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

So, rather than babbling on with meaningless words, let me show you how to pray. Gentiles, just a few things before we get into the Lord's Prayer. The Gentiles, or the NIV, translates it as pagans.

Yeah, pagans. How does the ESV translate that? They say Gentiles, yeah, okay. Yeah, the problem is that, certainly, Jesus does not want to exclude the non-Christian Jews from this admonition.

That's why the NIV went with pagans. It's people who are outside the family, outside the community. So, Gentiles and pagans certainly include hypocritical Jews.

And the question is, does our view of God lead us to heap up empty phrases, to keep on babbling? Actually, the King James is really good here. It talks about vain repetitions. This word here, translating babbling, is a fascinating word because Jesus made it up.

In English, we don't tend to be very comfortable making up words. Germans make up words all over the place. I mean, they just make up words.

Compound words go together, and they just say them and go on. Greek has somewhat of the same attitude that it's comfortable making up words. What Jesus does is use the Greek word *batalogeo*.

And logeo is to say or speak something. And bata is ba-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. It's an onomatopoeic word.

It's a word whose sound indicates its meaning. So, he coined this word: just don't keep on blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. I like pagans.

Or they think they're going to be heard because of their many words. There's no way to translate blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. We can do it with hand motions, but you can't do it on the text.

You know, don't do that. My doctoral dissertation was a comparison of Greek religions and Christianity, and one of the things that I came across was that it's a very famous passage, and we've never been able to translate it. It's about 200 words long, and it's an incantation that a mystery religion person would have memorized because they believe that when they die, they start going up through a series of concentric heavens, and in each heaven, there are demons waiting to eat you.

And so, religion consists of learning the superstitious, having charms and incantations that will defeat the demons who want to eat you as you ascend after death. And these 200-300 words is one of these major incantations. Can you imagine living in that kind of fear? And they finally realized that these 200-300 words weren't words.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That's all it was. That's why nobody could ever translate because they weren't words.

It was incantations, trying to get the names of the gods and just blah, blah, blah, and somehow that would save them from destruction. That was the world the gospel came into. And Jesus says some of these people's prayers are not really far off from blah, blah, blah.

Jesus says, don't be like, you know, they think they're going to be heard for their many words. I don't think that the issue really is the length of the prayer. It's very interesting how short the prayers are, isn't it? It's a very short prayer.

And yet Jesus spent all night praying. John 17 is a long prayer. So, I'm not convinced that is really what the issue is, not just the length of words in and of itself.

And in chapter 7, next chapter, verses 7 and 8, it's going to say, seek, knock. What's the other verb? I'm sorry. Ask.

Ask, seek, and knock. So, it sounds like, you know, repetition. You have Luke 18, the persistent widow, as an indication of how we should be persistent in prayer.

So again, the key issue is not how many words. The issue is meaningless words repeated over and over and over again. That's what Jesus is dealing with.

When people pray meaningless words and say them over and over and over again, I guess we have 711 songs, and we have 711 prayers, right? Seven words said over and over and over again. And that's the issue. Who are you praying to? How does your prayer reflect your understanding of who God is? And do you think that you can coerce God into doing things to see that kind of God? I see the kind of God that you can coerce by using many words repeated over and over again.

And in one of the greatest ironies in the history of the church, Jesus gives us a prayer to combat the endless repetition of meaningless words. And yet it itself has become, in so many people's experience, a constantly repeated bunch of meaningless words, hasn't it? I mean, for so many, in so many people's lives, the only question about the Lord's prayers is, am I supposed to say debts or trespasses? And I'm convinced that the vast majority of people, when they meaninglessly repeat the Lord's prayer, not only are they sinning because they're violating the clear teaching of the text, but they are showing a very defective view of God in the same process. If you have vain repetition, if it's just the same thing, meaningless words, over and over and over again, what we're saying is that we don't believe that you care for us.

We don't believe that you're going to watch over us. It's like a little child. Oh, please, Daddy, please, please, come on, Daddy, please, please, please, come on, and just, you ever have a kid like that? I just would not leave you alone.

I don't, but I've heard about him. Well, that's the kind of stuff that Jesus is trying to get away from in prayers. So, he knows what we want, and yet we're still supposed to ask him, right? Because he knows what we want, it doesn't mean we're not supposed to ask.

But we're not supposed to think that vain repetition will coerce him into activity. That's not who he is. So, that sets the stage.

Do you have any comments on that? Yes, sir. Yeah, I think, I mean, I went to, I met with a counselor for a while, and he ran me through a battery of tests, and one of his responses was, you think words are important. And I looked at him, and I went, you're being paid \$150 an hour to tell me the obvious? And he laughed, and he said, oh, you don't understand, Bill, for most people, words aren't important.

Communication isn't by words, it's other ways. And I just, I still can't wrap my head around that. But when I hear the same words repeated over and over and over again, they convey less and less and less meaning.

So, one of my bad habits is when I'm in a church, about the third time the worship leader says the same five words, I just stop. And I listen, and the whole volume of the church singing drops and drops and drops because the more you say the same word, the more those, the less meaning those words have. Until, at the end of the day, it's just the worship leader singing.

And many times, apparently, he has no awareness that no one else is singing. It's just vain repetition that destroys the power of words. And we use words primarily to communicate, and God wants to hear.

He doesn't want us to think that He can be coerced by many words because the more we say it, the less it means. Anyway, I'll say something to my wife, or she'll see the look on my face. And she just says, stop it.

Stop it. Because she knows what I'm thinking. Anyway, Lord's Prayer.

This is how we should pray. This, then, is how we should pray. I think the show is really important.

The way, and I'm going to have to qualify this, but the way Matthew is presenting this is to keep pushing this forward. The way that Matthew presents it is that these are not words to be repeated. This is a pattern to be emulated. Alright? How you should pray.

Now, in Luke, it says, pray this. So, there's nothing wrong with praying the Lord's Prayer. I always encourage people to memorize it.

In the New Believers Curriculum, I wrote that one of the lessons is about prayer. I said, memorize the Lord's Prayer. It's a good thing to memorize.

So, I don't have any problem with memorizing the Lord's Prayer, but that's not the thrust of what Jesus is teaching in Matthew. In Matthew, we're being given a pattern. And so, while the words of the prayer are important, what's really important are the themes and the structure of the prayer.

Just so you know, when I get to the end, well, we'll do it in class, but my encouragement always was for everyone to close their eyes and to pray through the structure of the Lord's Prayer. And I still think it's the most effective corporate prayer there is. Jesus is making the point in Matthew, not necessarily just the words but also the themes, structure, and ordering of things.

So, what are the basic things? First of all, there are orienting ourselves to God, our Father in Heaven. The whole purpose of the opening phrase is to orient ourselves. Who are we praying to? He is our Father, but He's not our earthly Father.

He's our Heavenly Father. We'll come back and look at the details, but you orient yourself by reminding yourself who God is in His imminence and in His transcendence. And then the second section is praising God, right? That biblical prayer always starts by praising God.

And praise is declaring who He is and what He has done, right? That's my favorite definition of praise. We instinctively know how to praise, but we don't often do it with God. Just show someone a clip of Michael Jordan flying and flying and then dunking.

I mean, we know how to praise. And praise is a declaration of who Michael Jordan is and what Michael Jordan just did. So, we instinctively understand that.

And that's what praise is to God. It's a declaration of who He is and what He has done. Finally, it moves to petition.

And as I'm going to spell in more detail, I don't think the petition is so much, okay, now it's all about me. I think petition, the focus is still on God, and we are given an opportunity to admit our dependence on Him for all things. Dependence for forgiveness, dependence for physical sustenance, and dependence on Him for spiritual protection.

So, prayer never focuses on us. It's always on God. Orient, and then praise, and then petition.

And I've heard that some people have other sets of words. Someone told me this the other day. Adoration would be the first section.

Anyway, there are different people that use different words. Okay, okay. Adoration, confession.

What's confession? Okay, so the confession would be, forgive us our debts. Yeah, I, yeah. Yeah, okay, all right, yeah, yeah.

All right, all right. So, let's start. So, that's my, I'm going to approach this, okay.

All right, let's start plugging our way through. I'll begin by orienting ourselves in prayer. Our Father in heaven.

So, our is plural. This is corporate prayer. Obviously, individual prayer is not wrong.

You say the Lord's Prayer, but probably in private. You shouldn't say our, and you should say my. Otherwise, it's a meaningless word, right? You're my Father who's in heaven. You can see you're in your prayer clothes.

You say our Father and Jesus goes, someone else here? It's my Father when you're by yourself. But this is a corporate prayer. Our, and then Father.

This is the doctrine of the imminence of God. You guys come across that word in your reading? I-M-M-A-N-E-N-C-E. Imminence is the doctrine of the closeness of the approachability of God, that He is our Father, that He is our Abba.

Okay, because Jesus is speaking in Aramaic, and who knows what He's speaking in. But if He's speaking in Aramaic, it's Abba, it's the term of endearment that's only used within the context of your family. But when we say our Father, what we're saying is that you care about us, you are approachable, you are involved in your creation, you have a deep love and interest in your creation, you have a deep love and interest in me.

And as we know, this was a revolutionary way to speak of God. The Jews would never, ever, ever speak of God as their individual Father. He was perhaps the Father of the nation, perhaps the Father of David, the Messianic King.

But you would never, in your prayer closet, address God with such familial terms. The Jewish habit of prayer was to pile up terms emphasizing His transcendence. And they'd say, Oh Sovereign Lord, Creator of God, Lord of the Universe, all of which are true, and which are coming in the second half.

But they simply would never use such a term of familiarity. We have been given a boldness, an audacity, one author speaks of. Our prayers are just audacious, that we would dare to walk into the golden, to the watery sea, or whatever the term is in Revelation, and to be able to approach the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and climb up on His lap.

And call Him Father. So, there's a boldness and an audacity to that. That's supposed to make up our prayer.

And if He is our Father, then we are His children. And so, when we say our Father, what we're doing is that we understand something about God, and it's also reflecting something we understand about ourselves, right? That He's our Father, we're His child, we're His son or daughter. And just like, you know, the obvious preaching example is a little kid who runs and, Daddy, Daddy, Kitty, will you buy me a Mustang? You know, I mean, kids ask for audacious things, don't they? They just, well, you're their dad.

Why not ask you for the world? You're the dad. You're the mom. I love watching little kids live uninhibited lives.

We were in China, and there was this eight-year-old kid who lived in the States for a year, so I thought I was going to have to talk to the translator. And the translator said, no, no, his English is very good. Speak English.

And you know what? He spoke English without an accent. And I said, I'm still having trouble learning, thank you, Xi, Xi, Xi, Xi, because the S sound is really hard. And I said, show me how you make the S sound on Xi.

And he did this with his lips, Xi, Xi. I tried to make the sound, but he just started laughing at me. He said, no, no, that's not right at all.

This is a little eight-year-old kid ridiculing the guest speaker. And it wasn't done out of meanness. It was just that he was a kid.

He's uninhibited. And there's something about that picture of this little kid laughing at me because I can't get the Chinese S sound properly. And there's something about that that is a refreshing reminder of how we pray to God.

As children, audacious prayers. I have audacious prayers that I make to God for Biblical Training. I generally don't even tell people what they are because they're just, they're not so crazy prayers.

But I think I'm supposed to be praying them, so I do. They're audacious prayers, only the kinds of things that a little kid would dare say to his father. But then it's balanced right away.

It's our Father in heaven. This is not Bob Mounts that we're praying to. This is our heavenly Father.

The heavenly emphasizes transcendence. That He is far above creation. That He is greater than creation.

He is independent of creation; he is outside of it. And so, these were all the terms the Jews were used to would fit.

You know, your majesty, your glory, your might. And there are some wonderful prayers in the Old Testament that really emphasize this. You know, we're praying to a God who's omniscient.

That's the point of the context, right? He knows everything. He knows everything before we ask. So, I ask because we're told to.

Asking Stott makes this point asking is an expression of our dependence on God and trust. We're supposed to ask for what He already knows in the same way that we make our kids ask, right? If your kid wants something or needs something, we let it, don't we? At least I did. We know what they want.

They need to ask. Why? Because it's good for them. It's good to come and admit their dependence and submit themselves to your wisdom.

And, Daddy, could I please have the bike? Well, you're probably not old enough yet to ride a two-wheeler. But I got this really cool big trike here. Daddy, can I have a bike? You know, I know you want one.

Go out in the garage. It's there. You know, I mean, this is just what an omniscient God does.

And it's good for us to ask. He's an omnipotent God. He's able to do whatever He desires.

And so, we pray with boldness and confidence and utter audacity. Unfortunately, the God we sometimes pray to would rarely astonish anyone. Again, this is my bugaboo.

This is my hang-up, is when I walk into churches, and there's no Our Father in heaven. Some churches are really good at, hey, he's our buddy, you know, putting an arm around him, taking a picture with him, selfieing God, you know, kind of stuff. And historically, the church has been pretty good at transcendence, isn't it? Most of us were probably older guys and were probably raised in churches that had a sense of transcendence about them.

I mean, when was the last time you walked into a church that said, be still and know that I am God? I mean, I did all the time when I was a kid. And I always thought it was kind of stuffy. But I understand what I was trying to do is that we are corporately coming in, and together, we are going to worship in the throne room of God.

And there is a sense of familiarity. But there also needs to be a sense of transcendence, wonder, and awe of who this God is. And as Robert and I continue to look for a church, I just say, if I could find a church that understood the transcendence of God, I'll put up with bad preaching.

I just want and need to be reminded that God's bigger than me; he's bigger than my problems. I am still looking after five years. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. All right.

Yeah, it's a hard balance, though, isn't it, in church? I was in a very difficult conversation with an elder once who was literally standing in one room and screaming at the top of his lungs at kids in the other room to stop running. And I went over to him, and I said, quiet. I said, can't you find another way to deal with the kids running around? No, they're going to run into the older people and hurt them.

I said, really, and your only way of dealing with that is to shout at the top of your lungs from the other room? And the relationship went downhill from there. Yeah, you have to be careful of kids not running and hurting people. But also, where's the father's side of worship? You know, I used to tell kids, I said, hey, you know what's really fun is jumping over about five rows of chairs.

I used to have contests after church. So, I said, how many can you jump over? And the kids would look at me and say, God, they're soft chairs. If they break, I'll buy another one.

Go! And we'd have these kids jumping over chairs in the worship center. Not during the service. I didn't want them to fear the church.

I didn't want them to think of the church as a boring place. I used to hold races of kids down the hallways. I said, hey, there's sugar cookies down at the end.

Go! You know, it's our father. You don't have to do that, but it's our father in heaven. The approachability, the closeness, the nurturing, and the awesome, transcendent glory and power.

And I think that is the challenge of the church. How do you do church on Sunday morning? How do you get both of those in there? Anyway, okay.

So, you orient yourselves, our Father in Heaven, and then we call on God to act. This is, I guess if I could say there's one thing I'd want to convey to you. You guys probably know this, but I think it's the one thing that really needs to be conveyed to the people.

Is that all the verbs in the Lord's Prayer are... They're all imperatives. Every one of them. They're all imperatives.

They're commands. Now, we have a separate category called the imperative of entreaty because you don't tell God what to do.

But the grammatical forms of the verbs are all imperatives. What that means is that in the Lord's Prayer, we're calling on God to act. And I don't think people know that they're calling on God to act.

And I think if they really knew what the words meant, they probably wouldn't pray the prayer because it's a terrifying prayer. But there are seven imperatives. The NLT gets a little closer.

May your name be honored, for example. Let is not a good English word, just in terms of literary style. I try to get you. Let your kingdom come, and let your will be done.

But that got voted down. Something's in the ESV footnotes along those lines. But it's hard to get it across in English.

The only church I've ever seen is Gordon Hugenberger's church in Park Street. Did I say that right, Matt? Okay, Park Street in Boston. Is that his translation? I'm assuming it was... Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's his translation.

And it's so different that they write it out in the bulletin. Because no visitor could get it right because it's Gordon's translation, but it rightly emphasizes, as I recall, that these verbs are all imperatives.

We're calling on God to act. So, what are we doing? Number one, we say, hallowed be your name—the worst single translation in the entire Bible.

There's nothing worse than this. This is just translation 101. In translation 101, you use words that mean something.

Nobody knows what hallowed means. It's hallowed ground. Yeah, it's hallowed ground.

Nobody in our churches knows what this means. Okay, maybe there's a few... Probably quite older people that maybe have a clue as to what it means. And we had this debate on the ESV and people... No, everyone knows what hallowed means.

No, nobody knows what hallowed means. And I have asked hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people in the last 10 years since the ESV.

And one person knows what hallowed means. You guys are an exception. You don't count.

People don't know what the word... So, why do we use it? Because it's tradition. It's a bad tradition. It doesn't mean anything.

But it's tradition. This is a large prayer. We can't change the Lord's prayer.

After all, if it was good enough for Jesus, it should be good enough for you. Well, Jesus didn't say hallowed. He said, Hagia Stata.

All right, I just... Okay, I'm off my tie. Thank you. I just kind of get it out of my system, and I'll be okay.

Hallowed. No, I cannot find anyone under 40 who knows what the word hallowed means. What does it mean? It's the word holy.

Honor is holy. Oh yeah, there's a phrase that everybody knows, outside of the Episcopalians.

Now, I mean, your people in your church that are under 40, I'd say under 50, don't have a clue what this word means. They know it's the word in the Lord's prayer. They don't know what it means, so they repeat it mindlessly.

Hmm. Isn't that what we're trying to get away from? That's why I fight this fight so vociferously. What does the NIV say? We'll deal with this again on the NIV, no doubt.

Anyway, okay. Hallowed be your name. What's your name? The name is the person.

The name refers to everything that the person is. So, God's name is a reference to all that is God. All that is... Yes, sir.

We got stuck with hallowed. I lost the vote. I would use may or let.

And I would say, may your name be treated as holy. Again, let isn't... I don't know how our resident English person feels about the word let. Most... Allow, but it's not a good word in English.

It's not a... It's an ugly word. Yeah, it's just... Yeah, there's just... Yeah, gee, maybe we'll let it happen. But may your name be treated as holy.

May is better. May is better. And so that would require you to switch the entire Lord's prayer around to this format, which I would be in favor of.

But it's... The name is everything the person is. All that is true of God, his character, his activities, his attributes, that's what his name is. It's like Jesus says in John 17, 26.

I may know to them your name. Well, what he's saying is that I'm... That Jesus may know to the disciples everything about God the Father. I may know... So, the name is everything.

And so hallowed is a verb that means to make holy, to consecrate, to treat as sacred. In other words, the prayer is, may you not be treated as ordinary, common, everyday, or profane in cultic languages. Right? There's the holy, and there's the profane.

The two spheres divide up reality. Treat... May your name be treated as holy. May your name be treated with reverence.

The NLT says, may your name be honored. The footnote in the ESV says to let your name be treated with reverence. And that footnote is there primarily because I would not let it go.

And there were people on the committee who weren't willing to put it into the translation because it was too different. But everybody, except a couple, understood that we had to at least put something in the footnote. By the way, other than that Bible, translators hate footnotes.

I mean, they just, with a passion, they hate footnotes. Because a footnote means we can't come to a conclusion. That's basically what a footnote is.

And so, when you see a footnote in an NIV, in an ESV, in a NASB, especially those three, they're pretty important. Alright? A lot of them are there because they differ from the King James, and they need to put a footnote in there so that people who are familiar with the tradition will see what's going on. And the other footnotes are generally there because the committee was so split.

I mean, the NIV now requires a supermajority, I think it's 70%, to institute a change. A little less majority to institute a footnote. But it takes a lot to change an NIV.

And so sometimes there's something that we really want, we can't get a 70, and so we beg, can we please, please put it in a footnote? And if there's a possibility of misunderstanding or something like that, then it generally goes there. But translators really, really don't like footnotes, as a general rule. So pay attention to them when they come up.

So, the ESV footnote is very important. I think you made a point that there's an imperative. Are there active imperatives? No, there are... No, they're actives.

They're all active imperatives. That's why the normal order of things, you can't get an accurate translation in the normal order. Well, there's... Wait a minute, I'm sorry.

Altheto is active. No, no, they're a mix. I'm sorry, they're a mix.

Dos is active. The face is active. I'm just going to double-check my Greek.

Oh, shoot, it crashed. Matt, is it a... Altheto, it's a... Oh, maybe it's a deponent verb. It's funny, I should know that.

I'm sorry. I'm trying to get my Greek text back up. It went away.

Well, sanctified does have... I would prefer to sanctify... I'd prefer anything over making candles. Because all I hear with hallowed is... It is Paris from Hagiadzo. Okay, so that one is a passive.

That one is a passive. But the other ones... Your kingdom come is active. Your will be done is passive.

Give this day is active. Forgive is active. And lead us not is an air subjunctive, but it has to be a force of an active.

The idea of... Why would you be made or led? It's important. An active character... Because sanctify your name. Make your name holy.

You do this. This is what we're saying. Make your name holy.

Right. Let me spell it out. You'll see why it makes sense as a passive imperative.

May you be known for who you truly are. Our prayer is that God will act so as to be seen who He truly is. That He would be seen and treated as holy.

Okay, so here's the question. How does that happen? If we call on God, act in such a way that we are shown to be holy. How does He do that? Life of the prayer.

This is why it's dangerous for people to pray the Lord's Prayer. Because when we say, may your name be sanctified. May your name be treated with reverence and holiness.

That starts with me. And so, what we're praying is, God, please move through me. Please act within me.

In that, the words that I use and the life that I live are an accurate declaration of the holiness and the perfection of God. Now, people have no idea that's what they're praying. I don't think.

So, work in and through me to declare your name to be holy. And then as we do that as a community, our Father, what we are saying, God, may the activities and the attitudes and the love and all the things that make up proper community life in the church, may the life of this church be a declaration of your holiness and your

reverence and your sanctity. What would it be like if our churches were that? Well, it would be heaven.

It's not going to happen until heaven. This is the problem of community prayer God moves in and through the individuals, and corporately through the church, to make a declaration of the holiness and the perfections of God, and then we backbite, we stab each other, we gossip, we slander, we undermine, we cut. We're cruel.

What is that telling the world about God? Right? I had a friend who had been in church for about a year, and he said, you know, I've been waiting to tell you why I almost didn't come to this church. I said, and we've become pretty good friends, and he said, I want to tell you now. I said, I didn't know you were thinking of leaving when you came, but okay.

He said I went to Sunday school. We still had Sunday school. It is a very rare thing in the Pacific Northwest, but we did it.

I felt that it was important to have a mid-entry level. You can't take a visitor and say, hey, you want to get into the community of this church? Join a small group. That doesn't work.

We needed mid-level entry points. So, the worship center was the large entry point. Sunday schools were the mid, anyway.

So, I went to Sunday school, and I sat down. There were two women who happened to be sitting in front of me, and they were just lying to someone. They were just backbiting, stabbing, murdering, and assassinating this person's character. He said, it was just disgusting.

And he said, I looked at my wife, and I said, we may need to leave this church. Just then, one of the elders sat down next to his wife and put his arm around her. And they looked at each other and went, oh my goodness.

She's an elder's wife. And I'm very thankful that their immediate response to leave was that they fought it, and I got to know them. They stayed, and they were great assets and good friends.

But I thought, you know what? Those two women were telling the visitors sitting behind them who they thought God was. May your name be seen to be holy through what I do and live how I live and what I say. May your name be seen to be holy communally by what this church says and how we behave, how we treat one another, and how we love one another.

That's why you've got to be so careful saying the Lord's Prayer. It's interesting, by the way, dropping down to the bottom of verse 10, on earth as it is in heaven. In Greek, if you have a series and then you want to add a modifier that affects all of the series, you put it at the end.

So, in English, we're so sequential in our thinking in English that the natural is to say you will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But actually, the on earth as it is in heaven very easily, and I think most likely does, applies to all three of the preceding imperatives. So may your name be treated as holy on earth as it is being treated in heaven.

May your kingdom come on earth as your kingdom has come in heaven. And may your will be done on earth as your will is done in heaven. So, this is an exegetical decision, but I think that's probably the right one.

So you think, how is God hallowed in heaven? How is he treated with reverence in heaven? I'd say perfectly, right? The angels, the saints, they know exactly who He is because they live in His direct presence, but without sin. And so when they talk about Him when they live out their lives in heaven, it's done perfectly, with perfect reverence and perfect approachability to their Father God. May you be treated with reverence on earth just as you are treated with reverence in heaven.

And again, please, someone in the American church figure this out. Without being stuffy and boring and hoity-toity, please, somebody figure this out. This is why my daughter goes to Episcopalian services and sometimes Catholic Mass.

She doesn't participate in the Mass, but she says, Dad, I need periodically to be with a group of people that understand transcendence. She's well-trained in theology. To understand transcendence and God's glory and His might and His power and His perfections.

And I can't get that when everyone's spilling coffee over each other, laughing and talking and texting while the preacher's preaching. I just can't do it. I need something else.

So, she actually went to the Catholic church for several years. I think it was Latin. I'm not sure, but I think it was Latin.

She wanted to get away from the church mess that we'd been involved in, and she just needed to rest in God. And she didn't need to know what the words meant. It wasn't important to her at that point.

Hallowed be your name. May you be treated with reverence and respect on earth as you are treated in heaven. Second imperative.

We'll get to the next two, and then we'll stop. Your kingdom come, or may your kingdom come. Remember, we've talked about a kingdom, right? Kingdom is not primarily a place.

The kingdom is primarily the sovereign rule of God in the hearts and lives of His children. And so, God's kingdom is when and where He rules in the lives of His children. And I like to think in terms of three time frames with the kingdom.

Part of it is looking to the past because the kingdom has come. We've talked about this, but the kingdom has come. God's victory was made certain on the cross.

The coming of God's kingdom looks at the present. How is He ruling and reigning in my life right now? And how is He ruling and reigning the lives of those who are within my sphere of influence? I watch the kingdom of God take root and grow in that present situation. And I look to the future of the consummation of Christ's return when God's kingdom will come in its fullness.

And so when we pray, May your kingdom come on earth as your kingdom has come in heaven. Again, where does that start? Same answer, right? So, when our people pray this, what we're saying is, God, may your kingly, sovereign, divine rule pervade my life as perfectly here and now as it is pervading the hearts and lives of the angels and saints in heaven. May your kingly rule spread through me to those within my sphere of influence.

May your kingdom spread spatially, as it were, as more and more people come to know you as king. May your kingdom come. Again, people don't know they're praying that.

May your will be done on earth as your will is done in heaven. What's God's will? Great question. I always said I never spoke much at youth groups, even when I was a college professor, but it seems that there were only two questions youth groups had.

All you had to do was really get good answers to those two questions, and you could be a major high school speaker. The questions are, what's God's will for my life, and can I sleep with my boyfriend? Right? Those are really the only two questions I heard from youth groups. The second one was pretty easy to answer.

No. Why do you think it's okay? But the question is, what is God's will? We pray, may your will be done. Well, what is your will? And I would always go to 1 Thessalonians 4:3. This is the will of God, your sanctification.

And then I would say, after that, do whatever you want. I'm not quite freezing on the will of God. I'm much closer to Walkie.

I think God does have some specific calls on some specific people's lives. But certainly, the bulk of God's will for our lives is our sanctification. These are Paul's prayers for the churches.

He wants us to grow up. He wants us to grow into maturity. Give thanks in all circumstances.

This is the will of God. Do good in the midst of suffering. That's the will of God, 1 Peter 2. You do the will of God from the heart, Ephesians 6.6, joyously, spontaneously.

I mean, we know these verses. But basically, the will of God is our growth, our sanctification, of our character being brought into alignment with Jesus' character, who is fully in line with God the Father's character, and then out of that character, doing the acts of Jesus, doing the acts of God, character, and behavior. And so, we're saying, God, may your will be done on earth.

Start with me. May it start with me. That's a line from a song.

And may it start with me. Everything reminds me of a song. I'm sorry.

Okay, and let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. All right, so we'll take peace out and put in the will. And may God's will be done in me.

May your will of growth, sanctification, and movement toward moral perfection begin in me. Then, may it spread to those around me that I can influence and who can influence me. I like to look at the vignettes in Revelation.

I like to look at what's going on in heaven because that's how God's will is being obeyed in heaven. And, you know, you see, well, my mom's favorite verse was the verse, it's all the saints. There's a lot of pain in mom's life: a brother dying, a sister dying, just a lot of deaths, her first husband dying of cancer.

A lot of pain in my mom's life. And her favorite verse was the verse in Revelation where the saints are under the throne, they're crying out, Holy and just are all your ways. And she would say, sometimes, Bill, sometimes, Bill, we will know that God's actions are holy and just.

It's going to be called heaven. We believe it now by faith that someday we will be with the saints crying out, Holy and just are all your ways. Even with all the pain and all the suffering and all the inequity and all the things that we have to deal with as pastors and that we have to deal with on earth.

Someday, when we see the full picture, we will cry out with all the other saints, Holy and just are all your ways. So that's how God's will is done in heaven. Spontaneously, joyously, with a full understanding of what God is doing.

And just as the angels and the saints cry out, Holy and just, so also now we call out, God, may Your will be done in me. May I become the kind of person You want me to be. And then, may that spread so that those around me joyously, spontaneously, cry out in the midst of any kind of circumstance, Holy and just are all Your ways.

It's a little hard here and now to do that, isn't it? We've got a lot of things fighting us. We have our sin, we have pain, which is not only a great teacher, but a great deterrent from learning. We have lack of faith.

I wonder how different this one line would be. May Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, if we really could have heaven's perspective on our life. Okay, that's the first half.

We're going to stop a little early for lunch, but I wanted to see if you had comments or questions. I've been talking for quite a bit. I'm wondering if you don't have a really nice definition of the kingdom.

The kingdom could be whatever God's will is done in heaven. Huh? That's very nice. God's kingdom is wherever His will is being done on earth as it is in heaven.

As long as we can be on a journey and learning and growing in the process. But the more His will, the more we submit our will to Him, in a sense, the less mixed the kingdom is and the more powerful His sovereign reign is. So, the kingdom is where God's will is being done in every increasing measure.

And that's what kingly rule is, isn't it? We submit ourselves to the will of our King. And we do what He calls us to do. You know, I remember when we were planning the church, we started with a Bible study.

I used the word "lordship." The man next to me literally jerked back, his face turning bright red, and he was furious. His church had been split by the misuse of "lordship salvation."

And a pastor had come in, and I believe in lordship salvation biblically defined. The pastor that had come in was using it just to beat people over the head, and it was really, really bad. And so, the word lordship for him, and I think for quite a few people, because of these kinds of issues, may struggle.

That's why I like what you said. You still get the kingly rule, the concept of it, but you get God's kingdom comes where His will is being done. And that bypasses a lot of the current stigma against lordship salvation.

I like that. Oh, yeah, oh. Oh, gee.

Oh. Yeah, yeah. So, was Jesus wrong? Oh, but it doesn't apply to us as the other dispensation, yeah.

Yeah. Well. Yeah.

Yeah. I would go in the other direction. What we call the church, the church visible is not the kingdom.

The kingdom is a church invisible. The church is the true followers of Christ, and there are many. Yeah.

Yeah, it ought to be, but it's not. So, no. No, I would never say that.

I never ever would assume that the church visible is, in any congregation, is the invisible church. And I think it's really important never to make that assumption. I don't think any of us can ever assume that everyone we're speaking to is a true follower of Christ.

So, I would love to believe that somewhere, there is a visible church where they're all members of the invisible church. Man, would I love to go there. But I would never, as a pastor, assume that's the case.

But let me pick up on the other thing you said because I think it's really good. These three things are not disconnected things. And that's what you're getting at, Dave, aren't you? That the hallowing of God's name, the submission to His rule, and the submission to His will are all intricately tied together.

You cannot pray. May your name be sanctified. Well, how is your name sanctified? Your name is sanctified in the spread of the kingdom and in the accomplishment of His will. So, these three things are actually very, very close together.

You could almost say, speaking off the top of my head, you could almost say that they're three different sides of the same coin. They're looking at the same reality but from different standpoints. How God is viewed, how people submit to His rule, and how people understand His will.

I like that. That's a very helpful way to think of it. That's right.

If those three are closely tied together, then certainly, on earth as it is in heaven, it has to apply to all three of them. I've never actually said it this way before, but I was kind of hearing myself talking. I go, I like this.

May your name be sanctified on earth as it is sanctified in heaven. May your kingdom come on earth as your kingdom has come in heaven. I guess you'd have to say he has come to heaven.

And may your will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven. You're really working for a client. For him to tell you your name, for him to say that he's come, for him to say that... Yeah.

Interesting. Interesting. Few words, lots of meaning.

Few words, lots of meaning. Okay, so we're halfway through, and we need to... I'm not very good at taking hour breaks, I apologize. We'll have to find ways on biblical training to split these longer lectures into pieces, Matt.

I think we're finally going to have to have the programmer have that functionality. An hour and a half is too long to sit in front of a computer. By the way, totally, there's a fantastic app for biblical training.

So, if you like apps, just go biblicaltraining.org, and that's us.

This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 10 on Matthew 6:1 and following, Works of Piety, Prayer.