**Opening Quote:** “We are more prayerless than we have ever been in the past. Our spiritual health is in free fall.” – Tim Keller

* With the pervasiveness of social media, the internet, and various sorts of electronic devices, all studies (faith based and secular studies) point to our Western society having less solitude than ever before.

**Opening Question**: Does sin include more than actions or things actually done?

* Often time we misunderstand sin by thinking of it only in terms of actions or things actually done, and thus misunderstand sin in some respects.
* The essence of the biblical teaching on sin is that it is essentially a disposition (it’s our nature). It is a state of heart. **Sin is ultimately self-worship and self-adulation**, and our Lord shows that this tendency on our part to self-adulation is something that follows us even into our worshiping. We can persuade ourselves into believing that we are worshipping God, when we are actually worshiping ourselves.
* This is what Jesus is addressing by pointing out that even in our giving, praying, and fasting, we can truly be sinning.

**Vs. 5-8 - Three Talking Points:**

**Praying to be “seen by others” (V.5): The Wrong Way to Pray**

* Prayer was a pillar of Jewish piety. Public prayer, said aloud in the morning, afternoon, and evening, was very common. Jesus teaches us that there is a wrong way to pray. The wrong way is to pray in public with a desire to be seen by others or to pray with the desire for others to be impressed. Jesus is ***condoning pretentious displays of piety***, and Jesus is warning us of ***sinful internal motivations*** that can creep up in our hearts even during acts of piety (such as giving and praying).

**Praying “in secret” (V. 6): The Right Way to Pray**

* **Question:** Do we have a healthy private prayer life?
* Jesus is not condemning all public prayer (Matt. 14:19; 15:36 – he prays publicly himself), but is certainly encouraging ***private prayer*** which is only between us and God.

**Praying while heaping up “empty phrases” being “heard for their many words:”**

* Pagans repeated the names of their gods or the same words over and over without thinking often in public prayers***. Jesus is*** ***prohibiting mindless, mechanical repetition***, not the earnest repetition that flows from a pleading heart (Luke 11:5-13 – Luke’s version of this same story includes some of Jesus’ words that seems to encourage a continued pursuit of praying to God about important matters in our life).

9Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. **10**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11**Give us this day our daily bread, **12**and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**Breaking Down the Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven**:

* Who can pray “Our Father?” – John 8:42 & Luke 11:11-13
* Children of God can call God Father. Also, a foundational conviction that ***God is one’s Father, and is for me*** is key in having a strong prayer life. Why else would Jesus start “our Father?”

**Hallowed be your name**:

* God is Holy and his name is worthy of our honor, esteem, and reverence. We should pray that *people all over the world would reverence God’s name*, as should we *pray that God would help us to revere God’s name*.

**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**:

* Why do we ask for God’s kingdom to be established, when his Kingdom has already been established? God’s kingdom, in a sense, has not fully come (perfect obedience and worship in Heaven is not yet happening on earth). Jesus is teaching us to *pray with God’s will and kingdom’s advancement in mind*. It is an invitation to pray alongside God’s plan that his perfect will be accomplished, and *an opportunity to submit/align our will* with God’s.

**Give us this day our daily bread**:

* Jesus invites us into a time of praying and asking God to *provide for our daily provisions*. Jesus knows we all have every day practical needs. Furthermore, this helps *us remember to be thankful and grateful for our provisions*, as well as *contentment* for the many blessings God has given us.

**Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**:

* There is a real correlation between receiving forgiveness and forgiving others. Jesus invites us into a *sincere time of confession and repentance*, and at the same time invites us *to forgive just as God forgives us*. Thus, God in a sense is inviting us into a time where we ask God to help us be as forgiving to others as he has been with us. Does Jesus need to ask for forgiveness? No, so it is at this point that this prayer truly seems to be for our benefit.

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**:

* All our experiences (pleasant or painful) are tests from God, and all of them have the potential to be temptations from Satan. In pain, we can either trust God or curse God. In our pleasure or pleasant experiences, we have the opportunity to either thank God for our blessings or to idolize pleasant things.
* This portion of the prayer acknowledges that life has many tests, and invites us to *ask God to please protect us from Satan’s snares* (asking God to deliver us from evil and the evil one). God please *keep us from faith destructive temptations*.

**Extra Passages on Prayer:**

**1 Thess. 5:16-18:** 16Rejoice always, 17**pray without ceasing**, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

* We can pray at all times, but we should also have devoted times of prayer (Ex: Lord’s Prayer).

**James 4:3: 3**You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

* Sometimes we pray wrongly and for the wrong things. Pray with the Lord’s prayer in mind.

**1 John 3:21-22: 21**Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22**and *whatever we ask we receive from him*, ***because*** *we keep his commandments* and do what *pleases him*.

**James 5:16: 16**Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous person has great power** as it is working.

* In these versus our faithfulness and obedience seems to positively influence our prayers.

**Luke 11:8: 8**I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. Ask, seek, knock… (v. 9)

* Luke’s version of the Lord’s prayer emphasizes and encourages pleading to God.