

Matthew Lesson 11

And we continue with the Sermon on the Mount and pick it up with Yeshua's teaching on prayer. But before we get to this I want to look at three so called pillars of rabbinic teaching and thinking. The Rabbis saw repentance, righteousness and prayer as the three things that were foundational to living a righteous life.

John the Baptizer called people to repentance. In the Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua has been discussing what righteousness looks like. It looks like - being merciful, meek, being persecuted, being salt and light, and He now discusses the importance, the attitude and the heart of prayer. He begins with

Matthew 6:5-9 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Yeshua begins with a warning. DON'T BE LIKE THE HYPOCRITES!
WHY? They pray where people can see and hear them, and they can then receive praise from men.

Hypocrites are praying for their own glory, and Yeshua lets it be known, they have received their reward.

Then He draws attention to each person saying, **BUT YOU**, when you pray, do it privately - in your room with the door shut.

And what is the benefit of this isolation when you are praying?

Your Father in heaven will see you and reward you openly!

And He adds, don't pray with "vain repetitions." What is a vain repetition?



Many believe that when Yeshua speaks of "vain repetitions" that He is referring to Jewish liturgy, but this is a very mistaken idea. Liturgy was part of the worship services in the synagogues. Yeshua and His disciples would have participated in these services. These were not considered public displays of individual prayer. Liturgy is corporate prayer.



Yeshua is referring to Gentile practices of pagan prayer in which meaningless syllables or names of gods or magic words, or kinds of "chantings" that were repeated over and over that pagans used to bring about apocalyptic visions. Some of these "chantings" were even used by Jewish mystics in hopes of bringing about these visions.

These things were what Yeshua was referring to as "vain repetitions." It is not actually repetition itself that Yeshua is teaching against, as we see repetition in the Word or Psalms, for instance, but He is referring to the pagan practices of prayer.

He so eloquently says, People using many words think they will be heard, but in actuality G-d already knows what we need before we even ask!

Matthew 6:9 Our Father

This phrase is met to include all who hear it. Remember Yeshua's audience is Gentiles and Jews. Our Father includes all people and presents two huge truths:

1. We are all G-d's creation and
2. We all have responsibility to G-d as our Father!

Malachi gives us insights into G-d's heart about His role as our Father saying:

Malachi 1:6 A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is your fear of Me? says the LORD of Hosts to you priests who despise My name. But you ask, How have we despised Your name?

The phrase Our Father is INCLUSIVE - it EXCLUDES no one! It is, in a way, a wake up call - **The Creator G-d is our Father!**

And this phrase, our Father, PUTS US IN G-D'S FAMILY!!! G-D is all about family, and Yeshua is teaching this through these two words.

As "our Father," those two words alone tell us We have responsibility to cause Him to be honored. The first words in the Lord's Prayer are:

Matthew 6:9 Our Father in heaven.....

Now G-d's infinite power and ability to do anything add to the awe inspiring words, our Father! Our Father lives in heaven. Maybe your earthly father lives in Alabama or Holland and that is where you think of them living.

But Our Father, to whom we are praying, lives in heaven.

Luke 10:21 At that time Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and declared, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight.

Not only does our Father live in heaven but **He is Lord** of heaven and earth, And as our Father, He is caring for us from heaven with the ability to know everything that is going on in our lives from that heavenly perspective.

Luke 12:22-32 And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need. So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

1. Considering these things, how does the phrase, "Our Father who is in heaven" give you peace?

"Our Father who is in heaven," leads us directly into the next thought:

Matthew 6:9*hallowed be Your name.*

To "hallow" is to sanctify something. To sanctify is an ONGOING PROCESS!

The Hebrew word for "sanctify" is *heetkadshu*.

This word shows that when we sanctify His name we are pursuing righteousness.

Our lives are focused on Him and we are putting all our efforts into doing what pleases Him as gives Him glory.

This thought comes from

Ezekiel 38:23 So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

***This phrase is really a Hebrew idiom, "to sanctify the Name," and was referring to those who would give up their lives for their faith or for the honor of G-d.

"The sages of Israel taught that this verse means that one must be willing to sacrifice their lives to sanctify G-d's name. This was putting the spotlight on those who would be willing to be martyrs for living righteously and in so doing would sanctify - or make G-d's name holy, by their sacrifice.

Ezekiel 38:23 I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations.

2. How does this idiom change the way you have thought of the words, "hallowed be Your name?"

Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come.....

Means **may You cause Your kingdom to reign;** it is not about a date on the calendar, like dad's coming home on May 5th; it is about His Kingdom reigning!

I Chronicles 28:4a Yet the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me out of all my father's house to be king over Israel forever.

The Hebrew words tahmleek mahlcutchah would be the Hebrew for, "May you continue **establishing** your Kingship....."

From this we hear the "**ing**" on continue" which we know an "ing" at the end of a word in English means something that is on-going! We are traveling, I am talking on the phone, you are reading - these are on-going processes.

3. We usually think of His kingdom coming as having to do with a specific date.

What makes "His kingdom coming" an on-going process?

It is up to us on earth to help His kingdom be established!

As we act to do G-d's will in our lives, those actions literally vibrate in heaven, causing His kingdom to become more established. When we do His will, we are helping to establish His kingdom! There is a battle going on, but His kingdom and His reign are eternal - these are not connected to time. His kingdom coming is connected to our righteous living and to G-d's active participation with us in redeeming us! We are in the process of heetkadshu (sanctification), and we are establishing His kingdom on earth as we are sanctified and live holy lives.



So the question arises, what did Yeshua mean when He said in **Luke 11:20** But if I cast out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Had the kingdom arrived? If yes, then how can it still be coming in the future?



Matthew 10:7 As you go, proclaim: The kingdom of heaven has come near.
(karav - meaning it has come near or arrived.)
So it could be translated as, the Kingdom of Heaven has arrived.

One thing we have to wrap our minds around is that Yeshua is the King. Wherever He is, His kingdom is. He is the essential element of the kingdom. He shows us the kingdom because He is the kingdom. The kingdom cannot exist without a king. In **Matthew 10:7** And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. "Is at hand" would be better translated as The Kingdom of Heaven is here, because the actual Greek verb shows completed action.

4. Why would it be true that the Kingdom of Heaven is "**here**?"

We know the Lord is king because of the redemption of His people from Egypt. He is the Redeemer. No one could have done what He did. By redeeming His people, He shows that He is King! He rules over all kingdoms and powers. He Redeems His people.

In G-d's kingdom, time as we know it is not the focus. He is not talking about a time frame, but about the fact that **He is active now** - He is always active, and His focus is the redemption of His people.

5. When does Yeshua rule? Can He rule in people who do not recognize Him as who He is?

We can conclude that He rules when people see/accept who He is and follow Him.
"He rules when He redeems His people." Brad Young

If you repent and follow Yeshua, you have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Now YOU and I take His kingdom out into the world and bring others in because He lives in us!

Matthew 6:10b Your will be done.....

When Yeshua called people to repent, they were being invited into the kingdom. A king cannot rule without people; and at the same time, the people's actions must be in line with the king's requirements and goals.

What prevents His will from being done? Two things - One - our own evil inclination and Two - the kingdom's of the world that we live in.

As we learn to overcome our own sin - pursue righteousness - and do His will above any other kingdom's, then the phrase, "Thy will be done," can be understood as:

Thy will be done so your kingdom will continue to be established.

6. Do you see our role in building the kingdom? How would you explain it?

Matthew 10:11 Give us today our daily bread

There are different thoughts about what the two words "daily bread" mean, but it becomes clear when we consider how G-d sent "daily bread" to the children of Israel in the wilderness in the form of manna. (Exodus 16:4)

It is interesting to note that the word "bread" (lechem, in Hebrew) means more than just food, it implies all of man's needs. So this prayer is saying, Give us all of our daily needs - we are dependent on You to supply what we need.

In **Matthew 6:25-26** Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Yeshua's own words in Matthew would confirm that He is telling us to trust Him for our daily needs - all of them.

The one who follows Yeshua is to be dependent on Him for our every need.

Rabbi Eleazer Hamodai summed it up beautifully when he said:

"He who created the day also created its sustenance."

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

The best way to begin to understand the depths of these words is to ask a question:

Do you want G-d to show mercy to you? Then you show mercy to others. That is how He set up the kingdom rules. Why? Because that is what He does.

The only way His kingdom can be built is through forgiveness, and it has to begin



with us!

Matthew even presents this idiom in a Hebrew verb tense that shows **Past Tense** - in other words - it is not I will someday forgive when I'm ready. That would be conditional, when I'm ready. It is I have forgiven - it's a done deal - in the past. Yeshua sums this up in

Matthew 6:14,15 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

This is a **Hebrew parallelism**, meaning that there are two ideas here that are basically the same. In this case, the second idea (deliver us from evil) explains more fully the idea contained in the first thought (lead us not into temptation.)

We do want to take James into consideration here also.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

In simple terms these two thoughts, put together, tell us in order to avoid temptation, we should not put ourselves in a position where we will be put to a test. We can actually put ourselves in places where we will be tempted. Wisdom would say - just stay away from those situations or places.

There are translations of **Matthew 6:13** that say:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

We are aware that we have a powerful enemy, and we are praying for protection.



I Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has over taken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

So, Rabbi Shaul leaves us with these encouraging words in I Corinthians.

***What new insight have you learned about the Lord's Prayer?*