

Teach Us to Pray: Intimate and Transcendent

Matthew 6:9

Bethany Assembly of God

3.10.24

Central Proposition: You should be intimate and ultimate when you pray.

Introduction

We're going to take a break from our series in the Gospel of John until after Easter so that we can give some attention to something we value as a church. At a recent day of fasting and prayer with our pastoral staff, we were discussing a book we're reading together about prayer called *In Jesus' Name*. The chapter we were discussing talks about how to build a culture of prayer. A culture of prayer means that we all have a shared value of prayer; we all agree that it's too important to be neglected or left to chance. To truly value something means that we stop talking about it and we actually do it. This morning, we're focusing on how to begin your prayers.

1. You can approach with the confidence of family.

Let's start with intimacy. Calling God "Father" only seems commonplace or trivial to the most flippant observer. We're not all God's children. God's Word says that you have to *become* God's child. Jesus has given us this right. See John 1:12. It's a great theological truth: we have become children of God through faith in Jesus. If your faith is in Jesus, God is your Father. Don't be afraid to come to Him and don't neglect the relationship because of insecurity, pride, or self-righteousness.

2. You can start with what matters most.

"Hallowed be your name" is a request and it's fitting that our prayer begins with worship, with acknowledging God's holiness ourselves. A more understandable translation would be, "May your name be honored as holy." It matters that this is the first request of the prayer. When you worship God for His holiness, you reset your mind. You are moved away from the sin and the imperfections of this world to the perfection of God. You remember that God is just in the midst of an unjust world, that He is forgiving in a merciless rat race, that His love never gives up in a world where love is only skin deep. And you are moved from a position of weakness to strength as you regain confidence that sin and distress are not the end. As you remember God's perfection, you receive courage to be holy like He is. Because of Jesus, you and I are set apart or holy to the Lord. But, we are also commanded to live our everyday lives in holiness. This means when we pray, "May your name be honored as holy," part of that prayer is that we would live in such a way that shows God's holiness. This request teaches us to put God's glory and honor ahead of our own and pray for that first.

Conclusion

So, we start our prayers by combining the imminent and the transcendent, the familiar with the extraordinary. We boldly come into God's presence and address Him as Father and immediately, we remember that He is heavenly and holy and so, we pray that the whole world will come to recognize His holiness and that God will use us to help reveal that.

Consider the wonder of calling God your Father. Start with God's glory and holiness and see how it will change your prayer life!