
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Philippians 4:6 | Psalm 32:5-6 | Matthew 7:7-8

STUDY FOR 7.17.22

SUMMARY

In our upcoming sermon series, we will survey many of the Psalms and explore how we can use their different genres in prayer. In preparation for that series, it might be helpful to remind ourselves what we are doing when we engage in the act of prayer. The Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us that prayer is “an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.” This definition follows the same pattern Jesus used when he taught his disciples how to pray. “Your kingdom come, your will be done” is a petition for things agreeable to his sovereign will. “Forgive us our debts” is a plea of confession and dependence on his mercies. Praying for “daily bread” is to be thankful for his endless provision. In short, biblical prayer includes all these elements; praise, petition, confession, and thanksgiving are all essential components of prayer. But perhaps the most important aspect of prayer is the clause in the Westminster’s definition which states, “in the name of Christ.” If you believe in the saving work of Jesus, it means you believe he takes your sin from you, pays its price on the cross, and then gives you his righteousness in return. This transaction is what gives you access to God—not because of your work, but his. We can take our praise, petitions, confessions, and words of thanksgiving directly to the throne room of God because we stand there in Christ’s name. Jesus—who is the mediator between God and man—gives us and our prayers access to God the Father.

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of Matthew 6:5-15, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

In reading through the Lord’s Prayer and the Westminster’s definition of prayer, what elements of prayer are most present in your prayer life? Which might need growth?

Read Matthew 7:7-8. When Jesus says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find,” is there any limit to what we can ask of God? Can we ask for anything and expect God to give it to us? How does this work?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.