



Two months of Daily Meditations and Prayers based on

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

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JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew chapters 5 to 7

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is amazing!

- Amazing for its simplicity.
- Amazing for how profound it is.
- Amazing for its illustrations from common, ordinary, everyday life.
- Amazing because almost everyone, Christian or not, would agree with it.
- Amazing because society finds it so hard to live by.
- Amazing because, while I agree with it 100%, I also find it hard to live by!

Perhaps it strikes at the very heart of the problems we all face as human beings – the problems of sin and selfishness.

But Jesus not only taught it – He lived it!

He lived it daily, through everything He did – His temptations, His suffering, His sacrificial life.

No wonder these three chapters end with the words:

“When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, for He was teaching them with authority, and not as their scribes” – Matthew 7:28-29.

Most people, even those who are not Christians, have heard of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount - and may even quote bits of it!

This book consists of a series of meditations and prayer suggestions, for going through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 to 7) over a period of about 2 months.

Each day there are a few thoughts and a few suggestions for prayer which can be used as part of a Christian's Quiet Time.

But of course the most important part is applying those teachings in our daily lives! This is why it is important to look at what Jesus taught, bit by bit, so that we can apply each day what the Lord is saying to us, and build these into our lives.

May God bless you as you meditate on His Word and live by it!

Cover photo by Andrew Caughley

First month

PRAYING THROUGH THE BEATITUDES

1. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:3)

At first this might seem a strange thing for Jesus to say, because we might be thinking of “poor in spirit” with regard to the Holy Spirit, but presumably Jesus is encouraging us to be humble in our spirits. The Bible says “Be filled with the [Holy] Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) and so we should be rich in the things of God’s Spirit, but humble of spirit as far as our lives and attitudes are concerned. A huge amount of what is said and done in the world today tries to encourage us to achieve, excel, be proud, rule, be in control, and so on, but Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are genuinely humble. Please pray that:

- Those who lead in the Church will be people of humility, with a serving spirit rather than a dominating or domineering spirit.
- We will all realise that everything which is truly good in our lives is because of the working of God’s Spirit and not just of our own doing.
- We will humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God so that in due time He will exalt us (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6).

2. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4)

Usually we associate mourning with death, but we can mourn over a number of things – disappointments, the loss of possessions, the way we have failed people, etc., as well as the loss of people who have died. In all these situations (and many more!) God will comfort and help those who mourn, if they will come to Him. “What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!” As we come to Him, with all our grief and mourning, we can find comfort and help from our Friend and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Pray that:

- Rather than carry their own grief and mourning, people will turn to the Lord and cry to Him for help and comfort.
- God will use these situations to draw people to Himself.
- Rather than turn to Him in anger, we will come to Him in faith and lay everything at His feet.
- We will come to know Him who cares for our every need.

3. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5)

Many people are striving to excel, to be top, to be in control. Many people are strongly motivated by pride and the desire to lead, control and be served, rather than to serve. But Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek” – those who are gentle and truly humble; people who love and serve and give, rather than always wanting to be in charge and to be served. Jesus modelled this beatitude (and, indeed, all the beatitudes) in His own life and ministry. Please pray that:

- God will help us to follow Jesus’ example of humility, gentleness and meekness.
- we will desire to serve other people, rather than always wanting to be served.
- we will realise it is better to give than to receive.
- we will realise the earth does not belong to the strong, the mighty and the powerful, but to the meek.

4. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6)

Hunger and thirst are two of the strongest “drivers” in our lives – we all hunger; we all thirst. We all need to eat and drink. Oh that our desire for righteousness might be as strong as our desire for food and water! Jesus promises that those people who really hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied – and not “only just satisfied” but filled! Please pray:

- That all Christians will really hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- That we will all strive to be holy, as God is holy.
- That even non-Christians will begin to long for purity and right things in their lives, and that they will find that Jesus is able to help them satisfy this thirst.
- For Godliness and righteousness in our society.

5. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7)

It is very easy to judge other people and be very hard on them; it is much harder to judge ourselves and deal with our own problems! In this teaching Jesus shows us the importance of being loving and forgiving towards others, so that, in turn, we will receive love and forgiveness when we do things which are wrong. None of us are perfect; we all deserve God’s wrath and punishment, but we plead with Him for mercy. We need mercy; we need to show mercy to those who have wronged us! Please pray that:

- Christians will demonstrate the spirit of love and forgiveness to those who have wronged them.
- we will extend mercy, even to those who do not deserve mercy.
- just as we give mercy and are merciful, in the same way we will receive mercy – both from God and from other people.
- the Church will be known for its love, forgiveness and mercy.

6. “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8)

Can anyone really be pure in heart? Not by our own righteousness or good deeds, because the Bible says that God sees them as filthy rags! But by the righteousness we have through faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood – shed so that we might be washed white like wool; white as snow – we can be righteous through Him. And He can clean our hands and our hearts and our minds so that we can “see” God (know what He is like) even now. There is much, much more which is yet to be revealed, but if our hearts are cleansed we can come to know God. Indeed “this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Who You have sent”, Jesus said (John 17:3). Please pray:

- “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23-24).
- That God will give us all a greater desire for clean hands and a pure heart.
- That people will increasingly turn away from sin and evil, towards God, in their desire to know Him and find the true meaning and purpose to life.

7. “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9)

In a world which is torn apart by wars, fighting, violence and division, how we need to hear these words again – and live by them! God calls us to be peacemakers, not fighters; reconcilers, not people who stir up division, hatred and so on. And this applies to Christians too! We are called to be united with all our brothers and sisters in Christ – to love, support, encourage, protect and minister to one another. Please pray that:

- The Prince of Peace will rule and reign in our hearts and lives.
- We will seek peace, not war; unity with all that which is good and true, not division.
- We will do our utmost to make peace between warring factions.
- The children of God will be especially known for their peace-making and unity.
- Our unity in Christ will speak to people about our faith and our God.

8. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:10)

There are plenty of people throughout the world who are persecuted – for a huge number of reasons! But Jesus says that those people who live righteously and who are persecuted for it; and those people who stand up for righteousness and speak out against all forms of wickedness, and are persecuted for their stand for what is Godly, will be blessed! The persecution is not the blessing; but God will bless and reward them for their righteous stand and Godly lives. What a challenge! Please pray that all Christians will:

- stand up, and speak up, for those things which are good and true and pure.
- encourage those things which are Godly – pleasing to God.
- lead lives which demonstrate what is good and right and pure.
- not be afraid of ridicule, opposition or persecution.
- glorify God by their lives and by doing what is pleasing to Him – not men-pleasers but God-pleasers.

9. “Blessed are you when people revile you, and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven ... ” (Matthew 5:11-12)

Of course, we are not blessed **by** people reviling us, or persecuting us, or speaking evil against us – in fact it is not very easy to handle these things – but nevertheless God will bless us through this time, **if** the words are false and because of our faith in Christ. If our accusers’ words are true, or if we have brought it on ourselves because of our foolish or wrong actions, not for Christ’s sake, then that’s a different story! Please pray that:

- Christians will be wise in all they say and do.
- When we are persecuted, or people speak evil of us because of our faith, that God’s grace will sustain us and bring us through.
- We will not retaliate by speaking back in the same spirit.
- God’s grace will be evident in our lives and will be a powerful testimony to those who would speak evil of us.
- God will help us to rejoice, even in these circumstances.

PRAYING THROUGH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

10. “You are the salt of the earth ... ” (Matthew 5:13)

Salt and white sand can look alike, but one has flavour and the other doesn't! Have we lost our “flavour” and effectiveness? Have we lost our influence on society? If we were “thrown out and trampled under foot” would anyone notice any difference? We **are** the salt of the earth – we should be noticed; we should have a distinctive, desirable “flavour”; we should be an influence for good, in society, and like salt, help preserve against decay. If we have lost our flavour, how can it be restored? Please pray that:

- Christians will help to preserve what is good and right in society.
- our lives, as Christians, will be attractive to non-Christians.
- if we have lost our saltiness, God will restore it, not cast us out.

11. “You are the light of the world ... ” (Matthew 5:14-16)

Yes, Jesus said that **we** are the light of the world and it is most important that our light is not hidden. It is a waste of time (and worse!) for light to shine but be hidden under something so it can't be seen! Our light (our lives, our witness, our words, our attitudes, etc) should bring glory to God as people see us, know we are Christians, and realise that it is God's power within us which enables us to live in a Godly way. Please pray that:

- Our lives will shine as lights in the world.
- Other people will know we are Christians, by our words and our actions.
- God will be glorified by His children honouring Him with Godly living.
- Others will be encouraged to become Christians too because they realise this is the best way to live.

12. The Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17-20)

We often tend to disregard or ignore the “lesser” laws and major on what we consider to be the important ones. But Jesus says we must obey them all – small disobediences are as bad as larger ones, because they are all sin! (Jesus did, of course, fulfil the *sacrificial* laws, so that they are now all fulfilled in Christ, and their purposes have been accomplished). Jesus also said that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees – the very people who prided themselves on their self-righteous deeds. Impossible? Yes – but for God's help, our determination, and God's grace and forgiveness! We need to listen to God's Word and obey it from the heart. Please pray that Christians:

- Will not become careless about how they regard even the “little” things Jesus says we should do.
- Will not be self-righteous, but will always seek the “holiness without which no-one can see God”.
- Will not become proud of their goodness and obedience, but will regard it as the normal thing for them to do.
- Will read and obey God's Word from the heart.

13. Anger (Matthew 5:21-26)

One of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. And one of the ways of testing if we are bringing forth this fruit is to put us into a situation where anger is the natural reaction! Now we all know about “righteous anger” (being angry at things which are blatantly wrong or sinful) but how do we react at other times? We may not commit murder but do we hate or insult people; do we “lose control” and say things we shouldn’t? It’s not easy, but if we are going to come to God with an offering and realise that we have “unfinished business” with someone, we need to first go and be reconciled with them before we come with our gifts to God and seek to be reconciled with Him. In a sense, God’s reconciliation with us is dependent on us, as far as we possibly can, first being reconciled with other people. It’s like sin – first deal with the sin, then come to God with your offering, your worship and your prayers. Please pray:

- That Christians, especially, will show forth the spirit of self-control, patience, humility, forgiveness and a willingness to put things right with other people.
- That Christians will learn to control their tongue – their words and their thoughts.
- That wrong and sinful anger, slander and unwise words will not be part of our lives.
- For God’s grace and wisdom; a loving spirit and yet a directness about speaking out against those things which are wrong.
- For reconciliation in homes, society, the workplace – wherever there is wrongful division.

14. Lust (Matthew 5:27-30)

Jesus quoted the seventh of the Ten Commandments, “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14) and then proceeded to state the spirit behind this commandment – not the letter of the Law but the intentions of the heart. A person may not literally and physically commit adultery but Jesus says that if we allow lust in our hearts, then in our hearts we have already committed adultery. Lust for another person is something which is so common today (and encouraged by many things we see in the media, advertising, television, films, etc) that it is almost taken for granted. No wonder there is so much immorality in society! Jesus said that this is so important that it would be better to be blind or maimed than go to hell because of perpetual, unrepented of, sexual immorality. Please pray that:

- God will shield our eyes and hearts so that we truly *love* people, not *lust* after them.
- God will keep our hearts, minds and bodies pure, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- God will provide “a way of escape” out of these strong temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- Christians will not dress or behave in provocative ways which incite or encourage lust in other people.
- Christians will demonstrate to the world the (very difficult) ability to live in this world but not allow our hearts and minds to be constantly polluted by lust.
- People will rise up against pornography and everything which encourages lust and immorality, and reject it.

15. Marriage and divorce (Matthew 5:31-32)

God’s intention for marriage has always been that a man and a woman commit themselves to each other in a lifelong relationship (at least until one of them dies), for mutual support, help, love, friendship at the most intimate level, security and family. Through thick and thin – as the wedding vows say, “for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, until death parts us”. This is a relationship which was never intended to be broken. Divorce was never on God’s “agenda”, except for adultery. (Incidentally, in this regard a “de facto” relationship, and a “civil union” between a man and a woman, are the same as a husband and wife living together in a marriage relationship).

Tragically, God's intention for the most beautiful relationship between a man and a woman has been frequently destroyed by sin. And Christians are not exempt! Please pray:

- That marriage between a man and a woman will be held in high honour, **especially** by Christians.
- For the lowering of the tragically high divorce rate.
- For the victims of adultery and divorce – the couple concerned, their family and friends.
- That we will successfully resist all those sins which spoil a pure relationship within marriage, and also before marriage!

16. Promises (Matthew 5:33-37)

The type of vow or promise or oath that Jesus is referring to here is one where a person promises or vows to do something "by God"; that is swearing "by Heaven" or "by Jerusalem" or by anything else, for that matter. These things are the guarantee, and are forfeited if the promise is not kept. For example, to swear "by God" means that if I do not keep my promise, then I lose my right to God. "I'll do it, by God" means if I don't keep my vow or oath then my relationship with God is broken. To put it simply, Jesus said "Don't do this!" Don't swear by anything. Let your word be so honest, reliable and true that your "Yes" or "No" is all that is necessary. The vows and promises we make are extremely important! Please pray that Christians will:

- put a very high value on the promises they make, and do everything possible to keep them.
- be known for their integrity, their honesty, their keeping of promises and commitments.
- be trustworthy and reliable in all they say and do.
- not lightly or carelessly make promises.

17. Retaliation (Matthew 5:38-42)

If someone has done something wrong to us, we don't do something wrong to them in order to pay them back. "Two wrongs don't make a right!" "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" was an Old Testament law. Jesus came to show us a better way. Jesus said, "But I say to you ... turn the other cheek ... do more than you are asked to do ... go the second mile". As Christians – followers of Jesus Christ – we are to show forgiveness, self-control, humility, generosity, patience and love. These are some of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Please pray that:

- Christians won't behave the way the world does, in terms of retaliation.
- we won't base our actions on Old Testament law.
- we will follow the teachings and examples of Jesus.
- the fruit of the Spirit will be seen in our lives.
- we will have a positive influence for good on those around us.

18. Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43-47)

If there is one word which, in its purest sense, summarises Christian living more than any other, it is the word "love" – sincerely desiring the very best possible for another person, and doing all that you can to bring it about. Faith, hope and love abide forever, and the greatest of these is love. Love is the first and foremost of the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ..." What a shock then, to hear someone say "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (or treat you badly)!" But this is what Jesus told us to do, and this is what God does, even for those who hate Him. God sends the sunshine and the rains to both those who love Him and those who hate Him. If we only love people who love us, we are no

better than unbelievers – but God has called us to love everyone: the good and the bad, believers and unbelievers. Please pray that:

- Christians will truly love other people, even those people who, in the natural, they might find difficult to love.
- Christians will love their husbands, wives, parents, children, neighbours, friends and even strangers.
- Even though we hate sin and evil behaviour, we will care for and love those who are sinners, and seek to show them the more excellent way – the way of Christ.
- Christians will show love to people of other religions, even though we may not believe what they believe.
- Christians will be known as followers of Jesus because they see the love of God in what we say and do, and the way in which we love one another.

19. Be perfect (Matthew 5:48)

“Be perfect”. How simple! How profound! How difficult! How impossible? Worse still: “Be perfect – as your Heavenly Father is perfect!” How can we be perfect? Only by what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Everyone sins (need I even say it?) But we can be washed from sin and cleansed from all unrighteousness, through the Blood of Christ (1 John 1:7, 9). However, our aim, as Christians, ought always to be – perfection. Perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect. We should pray for God’s help, resist temptation, wage warfare against the enemy of our souls, and seek to live Godly lives, even as Jesus did. Let us never lower our standards just because we don’t always achieve them! Please pray that:

- Christians will not be overcome by temptation and sin, but will be overcomers.
- We will not lower our standards because they are too high or too hard.
- We will live exemplary lives, consistent with what we believe, proclaim and teach.
- We will support and encourage one another to live as Jesus lived.
- God will help us, strengthen us, give us wisdom and power to be the people of God He wants us to be – perfect, even as He is perfect.

20. Humility (Matthew 6:1)

This verse is a bit of a puzzle: how can you live a good, righteous Christian life in order that people might “see your good works and give glory to God” but at the same time not be proud? It all depends on our heart attitude, our motives and how we demonstrate how a Christian should live. The motive for leading a Godly life is to be obedient to God and bring glory to Him. It is not to elevate ourselves, or become proud, or to live “before men to be noticed by them” and hence bring glory to ourselves, but to honour God and humbly show the Christian life in practice. Please pray that:

- Christians will live Godly, righteous lives.
- We will remain humble.
- Those people who are not Christians will see how we live and what it means to be a Christian.
- Our lives will attract other people to Christ.

21. Giving (Matthew 6:2-4)

In the previous verse, Jesus said we need to beware that we do not practice (or parade) our righteousness in front of other people in order to be seen and admired by them – we are to be righteous, but humble and sincere too. Likewise, when we give, it is not to impress other people – in

fact we should give in such a way that no-one else knows what we have given; that is “in secret”, as far as that is possible. Proud giving has its reward – a proud, self-righteous heart! Giving in secret has its reward – God’s blessing and reward! Please pray that:

- Christians will always be generous givers.
- Christians will not parade their giving or become proud of what they give.
- Christians will trust God for all their needs and look to Him, not to their wealth.
- Giving will be a real blessing to the recipient – a gift of love.
- Christians will be wise in their giving and led by God as they give.

22. Prayer (Matthew 6:5-6)

It is so easy to say and do things which are either hypocritical or are motivated by pride. Hypocrisy and pride are two of the things Jesus warns us about in these verses (v. 1-18). Just as we can be proud about our giving, so also we can be proud when we pray; or hypocritical in what we pray. Jesus says “Don’t!” When we pray, it is not so that people can see us, hear us and know how long we pray for. When we pray we need to pray humbly and sincerely, and live according to the way we pray. So Jesus says to “pray in secret” – where God sees and knows our hearts and our heart’s desires. This does not mean we cannot meet with other Christians to pray, for He also commends that – as long as our prayers are from a humble and sincere spirit. Please pray that:

- Christians will not be motivated by pride, when they pray, especially when they pray in front of other people.
- Christians will not be hypocritical when they pray – praying for one thing but leading inconsistent lives.
- Christians will spend time in prayer, in secret, where only God sees and knows our hearts.
- We will see God’s rewards – as we pray, and God answers.

23. Vain repetition (Matthew 6:7-8)

Jesus tells us that when we pray we should not use “vain repetitions” (empty, meaningless phrases) as some religions do. It is easy to repeat something over and over again so that it becomes a meaningless ritual we go through, whereas prayer is talking to our Heavenly Father! Prayers are not answered just because they are long and repetitive – they are answered because God loves us, sees our hearts, knows our needs and desires to do what is best for us. God looks into our hearts; He knows our motives – and our needs! God doesn’t hear and answer us just because of our “many words”. Seven words can save a soul – “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” In fact, God knows all our needs even before we ask; sometimes even before we are aware of them! Please pray that we will:

- Realise that we are not heard just because we pray long, repetitious prayers.
- Pray words that come from our hearts.
- Pray in faith and sincerity.
- Recognise that God loves us and wants what is best for us.

24. Prayer to our Father (Matthew 6:9)

In what has become known as “The Lord’s Prayer”, Jesus begins by saying: “Pray then like this ...” The opening address is to “Our Father”. Tragically today so many people do not have a wonderful, loving, supportive relationship with their father and this has coloured people’s thinking and – in some cases – people have found it very hard to relate to God as a Father. Nevertheless we need to look, not at our own personal experience, if that has not been good, but to what a father can and should be. God is our loving Heavenly Father. He created us, loves us, provides for us, leads and cares for us. Underneath us are His everlasting arms, protecting us and keeping us from evil. He is also the one who is over us, as our Lord and Master – the one to whom we are subject and who we must obey.

But even this obedience should not be seen as a negative thing – we obey God because He loves us and He knows what is best for us all! Please pray that:

- Christians who have not had a good relationship with their natural father, will nevertheless come to know the true meaning of, and relationship with, God as their loving Heavenly Father.
- Christians will not resist being obedient to their Heavenly Father but rejoice in doing what He knows is right and best for us.
- We will be able to show other people what God the Father is really like – not a remote, unfeeling, uncaring God, but a personal Friend.
- We will obey our Heavenly Father and reap the good fruit of obedience.

25. Our Father in Heaven (Matthew 6:9)

One of the seemingly contradictory things about God is that He is both our loving, caring Father, our Friend, the One Who wants us to know Him intimately, but He is also the great, omnipotent, Creator, King and Lord of all. This opening phrase of the Lord's Prayer shows this contrast – "Our Father" and "Who is in Heaven" (ruling and reigning from on High). Some Christians have a tendency to trivialise God and treat Him as a buddy who is at their beck and call, to do what they want, when they want it. These people become "too familiar" with God. On the other hand some Christians feel God is so awesome, high and lifted up that He is remote, almost unknown and unknowable. Jesus begins the Lord's Prayer with showing us that God is, indeed, our loving Father, who longs to know us and share Himself with us, **and** He is also the Almighty God Who rules in the heavens and over the earth and all that He has made. Please pray that:

- Christians will know God intimately – knowing Him as a loving, caring, faithful Friend.
- Christians will also have a high regard for Who God is – His omnipotence, power, wisdom and authority.
- We will have an awesome respect for God.
- We will also know that He is always ready to help and encourage us – willing to hear our prayers and minister to our genuine needs.

26. May God's Name be kept holy (Matthew 6:9)

God is holy. His Name is also to be kept holy (hallowed). It is not to be used lightly, flippantly or blasphemously (hence the Third Commandment). While God is our Father, He is also our Heavenly Father or Father Who is in Heaven. He is to be revered, worshipped, respected, honoured and treated as the only truly Holy One. Ancient Hebrew and Greek did not use vowels, only consonants, so the Hebrew Name revealed by God ("I AM") was written YHVH (or YHWH) – in a sense unpronounceable without the vowels. Even today many Jews write G-D (or the equivalent) rather than GOD because they do not even want to say His Name – it is so holy. How respect for God has gone in today's world! Please pray:

- That Christians, while relating to God as their loving Father, will also honour, respect and keep His Name holy.
- That Christians will not use the Name of God lightly or jokingly – let alone as blasphemy.
- That we will encourage other people not to blaspheme either, but respect God and His Name.

27. May God's Kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)

There are two different ways in which we need to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom: first, here on earth, and second, His eternal Kingdom to come. We need to pray for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom in the world, here and now; that He will rule and reign in the lives of millions more people as they come to know Him as Lord and Saviour, and begin to live for Him. Then, we also need to pray

for Christ's return and the establishment of His eternal Kingdom, of which every true believer will be a part – for all eternity! Please pray that:

- All Christians will live as sons and daughters of the King ought to live.
- We will do all we can to help extend God's Kingdom on earth – here and now.
- We will prepare ourselves for His coming Kingdom.
- We will pray "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" May that desire and expectancy fill our hearts!
- Millions more people will come into the Kingdom of God in these last days.

28. May God's will be done (Matthew 6:10)

May God's will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven! God's will is done perfectly in Heaven; we need to pray that His will shall be done here on earth too. This means God's will for our own lives, and for the Church as a whole, ultimately spreading throughout the earth as more and more people become followers of Jesus Christ. Please pray that:

- God's will shall be done in your life.
- God's will shall be done in the Church and churches.
- God's will shall be spread throughout our land and throughout the world, by spreading the Gospel and the salvation of many people in these days.

29. Our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

"Give us this day our daily bread (or, bread for today)". This is a very simple request that God will meet all our needs, each day. We are not asking for bread for tomorrow – just for today. Tomorrow's needs will be taken care of tomorrow! As Paul reminded the Philippian Christians: "My God will fully satisfy every need of yours, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). Note that it is not every "desire" but every "need". Often, of course, He supplies more than the bare essentials – praise God! – but He will supply all our needs. Please pray that:

- We will have a simple faith that the Lord will supply all our needs.
- We won't become greedy but will be content with what He gives us.
- We will be grateful for what He gives us.
- We will be generous with what He gives us.
- He will also meet the needs of (or use us to meet the needs of) other people who are less fortunate than us – both here in our own country, as well as in other countries.

30. Forgive us our debts (Matthew 6:12)

A debt is something we owe someone. We may owe them an apology because we have done something wrong to them. We may owe them something because we have not done what we should have done. We may have wronged them, ignored them, slandered them, failed to love them, taken something from them, and so on. In our relationship with God, we need to ask His forgiveness of our debts because we have wronged Him, ignored Him, said wrong things about Him, failed to love and worship Him, taken His glory and praise for ourselves, and so on. We need God's forgiveness. We need our debts to be cancelled. Please pray:

- That God will forgive us, as Christians, for all our debts to Him; for all we have done wrong; and for failing to do what we should have done.
- That God will forgive us as a nation for ignoring Him, blaspheming His Name and breaking His laws.
- That all our debts will be cancelled and we will be free!

31. Forgive us, as we forgive others (Matthew 6:12)

It is relatively easy to ask God to forgive us – we all recognise there are things we have done wrong, for which we want God’s forgiveness, but the Lord’s Prayer doesn’t just say “Forgive us our trespasses”. It says, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others who have sinned against us” – and that’s often an awful lot harder! We are asking God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. Presumably we want God to forgive us totally, unconditionally, not remembering our sin again or reminding us of it; not holding it against us any more; not resentful; etc. Then that’s the way we need to forgive others! Please pray that God will help us to:

- forgive other people unconditionally.
- receive and know His forgiveness in this same unconditional way.
- “forgive and forget” just as He forgives and forgets our sins.
- show our genuine repentance by a change in the way we live (i.e., not continually repeat the same sin!)

Second month

32. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)

This is a prayer that God will keep us from falling into sin as a result of being tempted, and that God will deliver us from evil (or the evil one). Everyone is tempted, but God can keep us from falling for the deception of temptation and the sin of doing what is wrong. The evil one (satan and other evil spirits) will tempt us and test us; our own sinful nature will lead us into sin if we allow it. How we all need God’s help to be overcomers – overcoming sin and satan. Please pray that:

- God will help us to discern when we are being tempted.
- God will keep us from deception.
- God will help us to overcome all the attacks and temptations of the evil one.
- We will live lives that please God.

33. “Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory” (Matthew 6:13)

In the midst of all our troubles and woes; in the midst of all our prayers, intercessions and requests from God, let us never forget that the Lord our God, our Heavenly Father, is the King of the one and only eternal Kingdom, and to Him belong the supreme power and glory over all things! He is the one and only Lord God! He is eternal! He is King of kings and Lord of lords! This should encourage our faith to be strong, for “Our Father” rules over all, and all things are in His hands. Let us pray:

- For the faith to believe and live out these truths in our lives.
- For the Kingdom, the power and the glory to be seen to be His.
- That we will give Him the glory which is due to Him.
- God’s power will rule in our lives and through our prayers.
- We will always remain humble, realizing that without Him we can do nothing.

34. “... for ever and ever, Amen!” (Matthew 6:13)

This final phrase from the Lord’s Prayer puts everything into the eternal perspective! Often we only see things that happen at the moment and wonder what on earth is happening to us. Why does God delay? Why does it take so long? Doesn’t God know or care? Why doesn’t He answer me now? But God sees and knows everything – He has a plan and purpose which stretches through time to eternity. He is eternal. His Kingdom is eternal. His Kingdom is worldwide. And we are part of that Kingdom if we are His disciples. Please pray that God will:

- give us patience when we need patience.
- give us faith when we need faith.
- show us the bigger picture when all we can see is our own needs.
- give us a glimpse of the eternal Kingdom, of which He is King!

35. Forgive, in order to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14)

Jesus shows us that if we want to be forgiven by God, then we need to forgive others who have hurt or sinned against us. Fair enough? Why should God forgive us if we won't forgive others? Unforgiveness hurts us and hurts those we have wronged, so we need to get rid of all the hurt and condemnation and bitterness and learn to forgive – just as God forgives us! How does God forgive us? Totally! He will “remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:33-34). Just as if I'd never sinned! Please pray that:

- God will help us to forgive others, freely, without holding back.
- We will be set free from hurt, bitterness, anger, resentment, etc., which other people's sin may have caused us to feel.
- God will forgive us, freely.
- We will know the peace and freedom which comes from forgiving others and being forgiven ourselves.

36. If you do not forgive others ... (Matthew 6:15)

One of the reasons why God forgives us is to show us that we need to forgive others. These are very solemn words: “If you do not forgive others ... neither will God forgive you ...!” Jesus wants us to follow His example – He prayed for those who tortured and murdered Him, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”. Whether other people's wrongdoings against us were premeditated or not, we must forgive them if we are to be forgiven. Let us pray that:

- We will follow Jesus' example of forgiving.
- God will give us the grace to forgive, even when we have been deeply hurt, offended or wronged.
- We will show the love of God to others by the way we forgive.
- God will help us to forgive and forget

37. Hypocritical fasting (Matthew 6:16)

Jesus had very little time for hypocrites and His strongest words were often about spiritual hypocrisy – directed towards those people who made a false show of their religion in order to impress other people. One of the purposes for fasting is to humble ourselves. How ridiculous it is, then, when we fast and are proud of our fasting, showing off to other people that we are fasting and we are therefore very spiritual! If we do things to earn the praise of people, we have had our reward, but if we do things to please the Lord, our reward in Heaven will be far greater. Please pray that:

- We will humble ourselves under God's hand.
- God will help us to remain humble, even when other people praise us.
- God will help us to remain humble when we are fasting.
- God will be praised and glorified as we do what is pleasing to Him.
- We will always try to please God, and not man.

38. True fasting (Matthew 6:17-18)

Essentially, fasting is between us and God. It is not for public show; it is not to impress other people; it is not a time for spiritual pride. So when we fast we should carry on as normal and let God look on our hearts, our motives and our desires. Let God hear your earnest prayers as you fast and pray, and

answer them as He, in His wisdom, sees fit. Fasting for show or for pride has its reward, but it will not be the reward God wants to give us! Please pray that God will:

- speak to us about when we should fast, how we should fast and what we should fast for.
- help us to fast for the right reasons and from the right motives.
- help us overcome any pride we may have concerning our fasting.
- hear our prayers, see our fasting, and answer us as He sees best.

39. Treasure on earth (Matthew 6:19)

Materialism is very much a god in today's world. Driven by a desire for prosperity and monetary security, people work long hours to make more and more money. Not that there is anything necessarily wrong with being prosperous, but it is what we do with our wealth, and our attitude towards our wealth, that are so important for the Christian. Jesus is saying that we should not set our heart on these things – they are worldly and will all pass away, not only when we die, but property can devalue, possessions can be stolen, company shares and money can devalue, our securities can be lost – even eaten away by moths or rust! Please pray that:

- Christians will not worship prosperity, wealth or possessions.
- God will always be first in our lives.
- Christians will hold lightly to the things of this world.
- Our hearts will be set on God's eternal Kingdom, not this transient world.
- We will be generous with all God has blessed us with.

40. Store up treasure in Heaven (Matthew 6:20-21)

It is easy to think only of our immediate needs and activities here on earth and to forget eternal issues. Jesus reminds us that it is more important to store up treasures in Heaven than it is to store them up here. Here on earth things perish – they only last for a time, but what we store up in Heaven lasts for ever. The saving of people who are lost; the development of Godly character; the love and service we provide to those in need; all our good deeds, are treasures in Heaven. Our worship and serving the Lord; our love for Him and for others; our faith and Christlike attitudes, will not pass away but will last forever. Please pray that:

- Our eyes will be fixed on eternal things and not be blinded by the things of this world.
- We will develop Godly character and Christlike qualities.
- We will love and serve our Lord and Master.
- We will love and serve our "neighbours".
- We will store up treasure in Heaven which will last forever.

41. Good eyes (Matthew 6:22-23)

What lets light into our bodies? Our eyes! If our eyes are healthy and open, we see light; but if we are totally blind we live in a physically dark world. Similarly, in the spiritual world, if our spiritual eyes are healthy and open we will receive good things into our lives, and we will be blessed by them, and we will be a blessing to others. But if we live in spiritual darkness, dark and evil things will enter our lives – and how great is that darkness! Let us not walk in darkness. Let us live in the light, walk in the light and receive God's light into our hearts and lives. Please pray that:

- All Christians will truly live in the light of God's presence, His Word and His Spirit.
- God's light will bring blessing into our lives and, through our lives, bless other people too.
- All darkness will be expelled from our lives so that we will be filled with God's light – body, soul and spirit.
- God will use us to help deliver other people out of darkness and into God's glorious light.

42. One Master (Matthew 6:24)

No one can really serve two masters because in the end we will tend to favour one and not the other. The one to whom we are most strongly attracted, for whatever reason, will tend to direct our lives at the expense of the other. One of the applications of this is with regard to money and our devotion to Christ. Either Christ is our supreme Master and we are totally devoted to Him, or wealth, riches and prosperity can be allowed to take away our devotion to Christ and may end up ruling our lives. In the life of a Christian, Jesus Christ must be Lord of all, and everything else must be subject to Him. Please pray that:

- The Lord will be truly supreme in our lives, and everything else – including our money, possessions, wealth, prosperity, etc – will be totally subject to Him.
- We will not try to serve two masters, and in the end lose out to the wrong one!
- All we have (which God has given us) will be laid at His feet, to be used in whatever way God desires.
- Nothing and no-one will take the place of Christ in our lives.
- Anyone who is struggling in these areas will be set free to serve Christ and Christ alone.

43. Don't worry! (Matthew 6:25)

Easier said than done! But Jesus here encourages us not to be anxious about our lives – what we eat, drink or wear. After all, life is much more than food and drink and clothes, necessary though they are. There are some things which are really important – like our relationship with the Lord and with other people; there are other things which we worry about but which really are not all that important. Our faith is to be in God and His ability – and willingness – to meet all our needs. Praise God! Please pray that:

- The Spirit of God will really help us not to worry or be anxious about things, but help us to trust God for all we need.
- Other people will see our faith and the peace we have, and recognise that these have come because of our faith in God.
- Other people will also learn, and be willing, to trust God for their salvation as well as for their daily needs.

44. Look at the birds ... (Matthew 6:26)

The world has millions and millions of birds; a huge variety which God has created. But He not only created them – He also feeds them! Jesus said, "Look at the birds ... they don't sow seed, they don't reap harvests, they don't store seed away in barns, but God feeds them! Aren't we worth far more than they are? And if so, then **how much more** will God provide for all our needs – the needs of His own sons and daughters! Why **do** we worry so much? "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" – one of which says, "My God will supply ALL your needs according to His riches in glory, in Christ Jesus" (Romans 10:17 and Philippians 4:19). Please pray that:

- When we are tempted to worry, we will think of God's provision, even for birds!
- We will learn to trust Him more and more, for all we need.
- Even in times of relative poverty, we will always have a generous heart and spirit towards other people who are more needy than we are.
- We will always be grateful, and remember to give thanks, for all that God has given us.
- God will be glorified by our faith and trust in Him, and our testimony as to how He has provided for us.

45. Worrying won't lengthen our lifespan! (Matthew 6:27)

Jesus points out a quite obvious fact that we won't live longer just by worrying. In fact, worrying may shorten our lives! Nevertheless, we all worry from time to time – it is a fact of life. Jesus encourages us to have faith in God and to trust Him for everything, even though sometimes that is hard to do, especially when we are facing a difficult situation or a multitude of problems! Interestingly enough, years later, in hindsight, they usually appear quite trivial or have been totally forgotten. How we need to trust God for everything, and commit all our needs into His hands, for His wisdom and His provision! Please pray:

- That we will learn to trust God more, and worry less.
- That we will help others in their times of need so that, in a very practical way, there is less “need” to worry.
- Our faith in God will grow and grow as we see God's answers to prayer, and the way He meets our needs.
- We will always be grateful for everything God does for us, and give Him thanks.

46. Worrying about what clothes to wear? Don't! (Matthew 6:28-29)

Some of the things we worry about are major, important issues; others are not nearly so important – like “What clothes shall I wear today?” Or “I've never got anything decent to wear!” Jesus reminds us to look around us and see how God provides for the birds, the animals, even the plants and flowers – food, nourishment, protection, etc. Lilies don't need to toil or spin – yet look how beautiful they are! Even Solomon in all his man-made glory was not like the perfection of a lily God has made. Please pray that:

- We will always appreciate the beauty of God's creation.
- We will give thanks to God for all that He has made.
- As we think of our needs, we will also think of God's supply – even for the lilies!
- We will enjoy the goodness of God in all that He provides for us.
- We will stop worrying, and start trusting God to meet all our needs “according to His riches in glory, in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19)
- We will pray for, and help where possible, the millions of people in the world who are far worse off than we are.

47. Do we have “little faith”? (Matthew 6:30-32)

When we look at what God has done for us, and for everything around us; when we see His provision for all our needs, why do we doubt? After all, the Christian faith is a walk of faith – faith in a faithful God. Why *do* we doubt? Sure, there are tough times, but God will see us through. Certainly not everything goes the way we would choose, but God is in it. And nothing can separate us from the love of God which we have through Jesus Christ. The world may worry about its needs; the world may eagerly seek after possessions and riches and security, but our Heavenly Father knows all about all we need – and He will supply. So may God grant great faith to us all – great faith in a great and faithful God! Please pray that:

- God will increase our faith.
- God will increase our understanding of Him as our loving Heavenly Father and our faithful Provider.
- God will help us to appreciate all that He has done for us in the past, and will do for us in the future.
- We will be known by our faith.
- We will encourage others in their faith.

48. What to set your heart on (Matthew 6:33)

People set their hearts on all sorts of things, some of them very ungodly. But Jesus is not referring here to ungodly things; He is referring to good, legitimate things – in fact, things that everybody needs! He has been talking about money (but don't set your heart on it); food, drink, clothes, etc. But the whole point of what He is saying is that first and foremost we should be seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness – and when we put this first, He promises to supply all our needs as well! As Paul put it in Philippians 4:19, "My God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus". Why worry? What a waste of time and effort, when you can simply trust God and rest in Him and His promises! Please pray:

- For all Christians who worry (you and me!) – that they will find their rest as they trust God.
- For all non-Christians, that they will find the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and rest in Him.
- For all Christians who do not set their heart and life *primarily* on seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- That faith will replace all fear as we trust in the Lord with all our hearts and do not lean on our own understanding or reasoning.

49. Today's trouble is enough for today! (Matthew 6:34)

Jesus concludes His message about worry with these words: Today's worries are enough for today, so don't worry about tomorrow! Every day we will be faced with challenges to our faith. This is part of life – designed to encourage us to trust God for all our needs. Since there are things we need to work through today, why worry about tomorrow? Tomorrow will have its own challenges, so just live for today – with God in control. Surrender, rest, faith, peace and trust are all words we find often in the New Testament. It is through these that we are able to live, day-by-day, in the way that Jesus is talking about. Please pray that:

- Increasingly we will learn to lean on the Lord and trust Him for all things.
- Overcome fear, anxiety, worry and all those things which are the opposite of faith.
- Receive the gift of faith and live in it constantly.
- Glorify God by trusting Him and showing the world that the Christian life – living Christ's way – really works!

50. Do not judge? (Matthew 7:1-5)

Many people only quote the first few words of this passage: "Judge not, that you be not judged." However Jesus says a lot more than this. He says that we will be judged in the way we judge others. He *also* says, "First get your own life in order and then you can see clearly to help others" (v. 5). So this is *not* a blanket statement, "Do not judge" – it is a warning to be careful about judging, and also that we can help other people once we get things right ourselves (very different from simply "Judge not!") Please pray that we will:

- be careful how we judge people and situations.
- avoid hypocrisy.
- examine and deal with our own lives and attitudes first.
- deal with the "logs" in our own eyes.
- then help others to get the "specks" out of their eyes.

51. Be sensitive to the Spirit and be sensitive to the spirit! (Matthew 7:6)

When we are witnessing, sharing our faith or what is precious to us, we need to be sensitive to both the Holy Spirit and also to the spirit and attitude of those we are sharing with. If people are open and receptive to hear, then we can share the precious things of God with them, but if they are antagonistic

to the Gospel and to God we may need to take another approach or leave the subject, at least for the time being. Jesus says not to give holy things to “dogs” who don’t appreciate them, or put pearls before “swine” because they won’t appreciate them and – worse – they will not only reject the things which are precious to us but may also turn and attack us! Please pray that:

- God will give us wisdom as we share our faith and testimony.
- We will discern where other people are coming from, and know what to share and what not to share.
- We will be careful not to share precious things with people who will reject them, and turn against us.
- God will lead us to share the precious truths of His Word with those who are open and receptive.
- We will have the joy of seeing a good response, not the heartache of rejection, scoffing and ridicule.

52. The sheer simplicity of asking! (Matthew 7:7-8)

Sometimes we make prayer **so** complicated! We have “formulas” for prayer, long prayers, complicated or high-sounding prayers, Old English prayers, etc. Nothing could be simpler than what Jesus says in these two verses: “Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you”. How simple – like a child asking his Father for something. Child-like simplicity. Child-like faith. Child-like expectancy. Father-like generosity, kindness and love! If only we could learn to pray like this!

- “Father, please help me to come to you with child-like faith and simplicity.”
- “Lord, please help me to remember that You give because You are a loving, wise Father; not because of my eloquence, my worthiness, or my “formula” for prayer.”
- “God grant me patience, persistence and peace as I wait on You for Your answers.”
- “Spirit of God, I trust You for the answers, in Your way and Your time.”
- “Thank You, Lord, so much that You love and care for me!”

53. Relationship – the key to prayer (Matthew 7:9-11)

Jesus illustrates the simplicity of prayer by taking an analogy – but one which is more than merely an analogy, because this is a true picture of us coming to our Heavenly Father in prayer. He reminds us of the fact that if **our** child comes to us and asks for some bread, would we give them a stone instead? If **our** child comes to us and asks for some fish, would we give them a snake instead? Of course not! When children ask their parents for what they need, the good parent gives them what they request. **How much more then** will our Heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? If we, who are evil, give good things, God will do so even more! Please pray:

- For increased faith as we come to God in prayer.
- For a real revelation of God the Father, as **our** Father.
- For a real revelation of God’s love for us.
- For a right relationship with the Lord.
- That we will come, ask and receive all we need to serve Him and other people.

54. A summary of the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12)

The Old Testament contains the books of the Law and also the books of the Prophets. Jesus said that if we want to sum up all that they said and taught in one short sentence it is: “Do to other people what you would like them to do to you.” We all want peace, respect, honesty, love, unity, support, encouragement, help in times of need, etc. How can we get this? By doing this to one another! It is all so very simple – except for sin, selfishness, laziness, greed, etc! So we need to learn to die to evil

and self-centredness, and live a life which is loving and caring towards other people. Please pray that:

- Christians, at least, will begin to apply Christ's principles to their lives.
- We will examine our lives and see where we are failing to apply Jesus' simple principle.
- We will pray for this to become a life-long habit of putting God first, and other people second in our lives.
- We will teach our children, and new Christians, to follow this principle.

55. Narrow minded? (Matthew 7:13-14)

Jesus said that we can choose to go through one of two gates: one is wide, leading to a road that is broad, and many people go through that gate. The other gate is narrow, leading to a narrow road which few people find. Most people go for liberal, broadminded thinking, not wanting to judge too harshly, lest they condemn themselves. A few people realise that broadminded thinking, all embracing philosophies and religion do not lead **to** God, but lead **away** from Him. Some people believe that "all roads lead to Rome". This is **not** true! Most of us have travelled on thousands of roads and have **never** been to Rome! Likewise, many people believe that all religions lead to God; this also is **not true!** In fact, all religions lead to hell. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** way to God and to salvation. So enter the narrow gate which leads to eternal life, not the wide gate which leads to destruction! Please pray that:

- People will not be deceived by false religions and the idea that all religions lead to God.
- People will not enter the broad gate and end up destroyed.
- People will enter the narrow gate, through Jesus Christ, and find eternal life.
- Christians will teach the truth concerning religions and the one, true Way – Jesus Christ – the Way, the Truth and the Life.

56. Beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15)

The world is full of ideas, theories, religious teachings and "prophets" – with plenty of people who are more than willing to tell you what they think is the true. Proclamations are made, prophecies of all sorts abound and there is plenty of confusion as a result. In the midst of all this stands the Word of God – a divinely inspired Word given by God to lead us into the truth. Jesus warns us not to be gullible and accept every "prophecy" as coming from God. Many false prophets appear as sheep, but are actually wolves in the disguise of sheep. Paul says, "Don't quench the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good and abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). Please pray that Christians will:

- be careful what they believe (and teach!)
- test everything by the Word of God and by the witness of His Spirit.
- not be led astray.
- hold fast to what is of God, and reject everything that is evil or from the evil one.

57. Become a fruit inspector! (Matthew 7:16-20)

The best way not to be deceived is to examine the fruit! You don't get grapes from thorn bushes and you don't get figs from thistles! One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of discernment, but anyone can tell whether or not something is good by whether or not it brings forth good fruit. "By their fruit you will know them!" Please pray that:

- Christians will not be gullible, but will test the fruit of people's claims, prophecies, manifestations, teachings, etc.
- We will reject what is evil and cling to what is good and Godly.
- We will teach people what is good and wholesome and God-honouring.
- We will live according to God's Word, His will and His ways.

58. Words or actions? (Matthew 7:21)

“Words are cheap”, the saying goes – and it is easy to say things without really meaning them. For example, how often do we sing hymns and choruses in church while our minds are really on other things? We sing them by rote, not out of passion and conviction. How often do we say “Sorry” without really meaning it? Jesus says in this verse that we can even say “Lord! Lord!” and still not enter the Kingdom of Heaven! Why? Because words, without actions, have very little meaning (see James 2:14-26). As Christians, our faith is to be **demonstrated** – by actions – not only by words! Please pray that:

- We will seriously consider what we say to the Lord in prayer, and what we sing to the Lord in worship, and make sure we **really** mean what we are saying and singing.
- Our lives will, in fact, demonstrate our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, day by day – at home, at work, with our friends, our neighbours and with new people we meet
- None of us will cry out “Lord! Lord!” and fail to enter God’s Kingdom.
- People will know we are Christians by our love and our actions as well as our words.

59. False claims (Matthew 7:22-23)

Deception is an awful thing! Jesus said that on the last day **many** people would claim to have prophesied in His name, and even claim to have cast out devils and performed “miracles” in His name, and yet Jesus will say “***I never knew you!*** Depart from me you evil doers!” Anyone can prophecy in Jesus’ name. Anyone can rebuke demons in Jesus’ name. People can even claim to have done miracles in His name; but Jesus said “You are My disciples if you do whatever I command you”. Jesus’ disciples, His followers, are known by the fruit of obedience to Him. If our ways are wicked, then our claims to do things in His Name will probably be false. Please pray that we will:

- all be true disciples of Jesus by being obedient to the Lord and to His Word.
- only speak and listen to true prophecies (and be given discernment to know what is truly from God)
- see miracles in Jesus’ name, that bring glory to Him.
- have the power to bind works of darkness in Jesus’ name and see the enemy flee, because of our faithfulness to the Lord.

60. Build on the Rock! (Matthew 7:24)

Hearing what God says is not enough. Even agreeing with what God says is not enough! You can go to church or read the Bible; you can agree with what you hear ... and still do nothing! Hearing, agreeing (and even telling other people what to do!) is not what God wants. Obedience to what God says is the key: we are wise and building on the Rock if we hear and act on what God tells us to do. Actions speak louder than words! Perhaps one of the Church’s faults is that we often tell the general public what they should do, instead of consistently demonstrating our obedience so that they see and believe! Please pray that:

- We will **hear**, **agree** and **do** what God has told us.
- We will demonstrate our love for God by our obedience.
- Other people will see Christians as people who live consistent, Godly lives.
- We will know the security that comes with obedience, and knowing our lives are built on the Rock.

61. Founded on the Rock (Matthew 7:25)

Every one of us comes across difficult times in our lives. Sometimes they occur because of something which is our fault; but often they are not our fault – in fact we might be doing our best to

live Godly lives, helping others and doing those things which are pleasing to God. Storms are a fact of life. Storms will come – upon the just and the unjust. But if our foundation is build on the Rock – on the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word and faith in God – then we can withstand the storms and come through them (perhaps a little wet, but at least still standing!) Please pray that:

- Christians will make sure the very foundation of their lives is, in fact, the Lord.
- We will know that we are only strong, in and through Him.
- We will not lose our faith when things get really tough, but will stand all the more firmly on the Lord and His promises to us.
- People who are not yet Christians will cry out to the Lord for help, in times of need, and will not forsake Him when things are easier.

62. Building sand-castles (Matthew 7:26-27)

If we build sand-castles – castles whose foundations are made of sand – they will not withstand the tests of time. The rains, floods and winds *will* come! You don't need to live very long to know that your life, your values, your morals, your faith, etc., will be tested by storms. If you are foolish, you will have chosen sand as your foundation, not the Rock, and the castle will eventually collapse – if not now, at least at the end of your time here on earth. The wise build their house (life) on the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ; the foolish think they can get away with building on the sand, but it won't last – “and great will be its fall”.

- Pray for wisdom – the wisdom to listen to God's Word and obey it.
- Pray that the teachings of Jesus will be proclaimed with power and conviction.
- Pray that people will fully grasp the meaning and implications of Jesus' teaching, and not just regard Him as a “good” person who taught “some good things” which we “should” obey.
- Pray that God will see you and your family through all the storms and trials of life, without your faith or foundation collapsing.
- Pray that the foundation of your house will always be The Rock, Jesus Christ.

63. Know it! Live it! Teach it! Show it! (Matthew 7:28-29)

When Jesus finished His teaching in the “Sermon on the Mount”, the people were amazed! No-one taught with the authority He did; no-one even taught such things! Moreover, what He said was backed up by the life He lived – which was totally consistent with what He taught. There was no hypocrisy in what He said. Also, these truths actually witness in our spirits as being “right and good” – the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Truth, and even non-Christians generally agree that all these principles are “good” (if only we could live up to them!) What do we need to do with God's Word? We need to **know it, live it, teach it** and **show it** in our lives. Please pray that:

- God will help us to live by the teachings of Christ.
- We will know God's will, and by God's grace we will practice it.
- There will be no hypocrisy in our lives either.
- The words we speak and the lives we live will also be a powerful testimony to other people.

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