

Lessons from Matthew
(Philippians 4:6)

Introduction:

1. This verse mentions 2 subjects that received a great amount of attention during Hurricane Matthew: "anxiety" and "prayer."
2. The Lord dealt with both subjects in the Gospel of Matthew.
3. This morning we studied the Lord's teaching on "anxiety" in Matthew 6:25-34.
4. This evening we are studying His teaching on "prayer" in Matthew 6:5-15.
5. According to Philippians 4:6, "prayer" is the alternative to "anxiety," so we need to listen carefully to the things that Jesus taught about "prayer."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.5-6) JESUS WARNED HIS FOLLOWERS NOT TO PRAY LIKE HYPOCRITES
 - A. (vs.5a) *"When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are."*
 1. A hypocrite is a play actor, someone who pretends to be something he is not.
 2. Jesus was referring to the Jewish religious leaders and teachers -- they pretended to be wonderful people, but they were not.
 3. (5:20) Jesus expects His followers to do better than these people did.
 - B. (vs.5b) Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of these people.
 1. They loved to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets.
 2. Jesus was not talking about someone leading a public prayer in worship -- He was talking about praying personal prayers in public (ex: Luke 18:10-12).
 3. The hypocrites prayed like this because they wanted to be seen of men.
 - a. (Matthew 23:14) Jesus said that they made long prayers for a pretense.
 - b. (Matthew 23:28) They wanted to impress others with their righteousness.
 - C. (vs.5c) Jesus said that such hypocrites have their reward.
 1. Their reward was the recognition of men.
 2. (vs.1b) They would receive no recognition from God.
 - D. (vs.6) Rather than pray personal prayers in public, Jesus said that we are to pray privately.
 1. Going into the closet and shutting the door puts us alone with God.
 2. With no one else around, the temptation to impress others will not be present.
 3. The Lord will reward this type of prayer.
- II. (vs.7-8) JESUS WARNED HIS FOLLOWERS NOT TO PRAY LIKE HEATHENS
 - A. When we pray, we are not to use *"vain repetitions."*
 1. Example: (1 Kings 18:26) The prophets of Baal cried *"O Baal, hear us"* from morning until noon.
 2. Heathens did this because they thought they would be heard for their much speaking.
 - B. The Lord does not want His followers to pray like this.
 1. We must avoid using vain repetitions because God knows what we need before we ask Him.
 - a. Some say that there is no need to pray because God knows our needs.
 - b. God knows our needs, but He still wants us to talk to Him (Matthew 7:7-8).
 2. (Ecclesiastes 5:2) When talking to God, *"let thy words be few."*
- III. (vs.9-13) JESUS TAUGHT HIS FOLLOWERS HOW TO PRAY
 - A. The Lord's model prayer is reverent, brief, and thorough.
 - B. From the model prayer, we learn that:
 1. Prayer is addressed to the Father (vs.9).
 - a. The Father is in heaven.
 - b. We are to reverence His high and holy name.
 - c. Jesus did this as He began and as He ended His prayer.
 2. Jesus prayed for the kingdom to come (vs.10a).
 - a. At that time the kingdom was very near (Matthew 4:17), but it had not been established.

- b. Since God's kingdom has now been established, it is not proper for us to pray for the kingdom to come.
- c. However, we certainly need to pray for the welfare and growth of the kingdom.
- 3. (vs.10b) We are to pray for God's will to be done (1 John 5:14-15).
- 4. (vs.11) We are to pray for our daily necessities.
 - a. (James 1:17) All good gifts come from God.
 - b. In addition to asking God to bless us, let us express gratitude to Him.
- 5. (vs.12) We are to pray for forgiveness (see vs.14-15).

C. One additional point is that we are to pray in the Lord's name (John 16:23b).

Conclusion:

- 1. In these verses Jesus tells us how we are not to pray and how we are to pray.
- 2. Jesus also showed us how we ought to pray.
 - a. (Luke 3:21) He prayed when He was baptized (a special event).
 - b. (Luke 6:12) He prayed all night before selecting the apostles (a decision).
 - c. (Luke 22:41-45) He prayed before He was crucified (a trial).
 - d. (Luke 23:34) He prayed on the cross (while facing cruel treatment).
 - e. (Luke 23:46) He prayed when He died (His final act).
- 3. May God help us to take advantage of this great means that we have of talking to Him!
- 4. Let us remember and practice the admonition in Philippians 4:6.
- 5. Let us follow the Lord's instructions concerning "anxiety" and "prayer."