

The Model Prayer

Introduction. The Bible tells us how the world came into existence and how it will come to an end. When it ends, there will be a judgment (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:11-15). But what would be the best way to warn man of his final end, as well as teach him and encourage what to do to avoid a terrible fate? God could best do it by becoming a man and teaching man directly. He did this through His divine Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

The people of Jesus' day saw His unique teaching (cf. John 7:46). His teaching is unique because it is the word of God and not the word of men. Indeed, He is the greatest man that ever lived, but He is scarcely given a passing reference in history books. Frequently, they describe a humanistic Jesus who could hardly have caused a ripple in the stream of human history, let alone change its course by His death on the cross. Even though the world may know His name or be familiar with a few historical aspects about Him, the truth is the world is woefully ignorant of the real Jesus.

A number of examples can be given for thoughtful deliberation which will sufficiently prove the uniqueness of the teaching of Christ. A brief summary of His teaching is seen in what has become known as "The Lord's Prayer," but which is more appropriately understood to be a "model" prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).

I. ***Jesus And God The Father***

- A. When Jesus referred to God as "Father," He was implying at least three points.
 1. The phrase "Our Father" settles all other relationships that we have in this world (Matthew 22:37). The relationship which we have with God the Father is to be the top priority in our lives.
 2. "Our Father" means that He is the one who loves and cares for us. He provides for our needs as an earthly father provides for his children (Psalm 103:13; Luke 11:11-13). We have a personal and caring relationship with Him because He is our Creator and Father.
 3. By using the term "hallowed," God is to be counted and treated as holy. In other words, God's name is holy, and He is to be set apart from all other names. God has created the world and given it life. Man's purpose here is to glorify God by his life (Isaiah 57:15; 1 Peter 1:15-16).
- B. Jesus did not teach the erroneous deity views of His day. Men glorify men, and even make idols of them. Some are more loyal to the names of the famous than they are to the name of God. They are more disturbed when the name of their idol is disrespected than they are when the name of God is cursed. How differently Jesus presents God's name!

II. ***Jesus And The Kingdom***

- A. The popular view of His day was that the kingdom of God would come and throw off the oppressive yoke of Rome and establish an independent state of Israel. The spirit of revolt was alive in Jesus' day. The people wanted a military leader, and if Jesus would have consented, many would have followed Him.
- B. The devil tempted Jesus to become such a leader (Matthew 4:8-9), but He refused to yield. The crowd at one time would have made Jesus a king by force (John 6:15), but He would not have it.
- C. When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He continued "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), and His teaching on the kingdom of God was more revolutionary and unique in many ways than the rebellious spirit of the Jews.
 - 1. It would be a spiritual kingdom (Luke 17:20-21) which would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44; Hebrews 12:28).
 - 2. The time was near for God's kingdom to be established (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8), and some would live to see it.
 - 3. He taught the disciples that the kingdom and the church were the same (Matthew 16:18-19).
 - 4. He taught the disciples that He was the head of His kingdom (Luke 1:33; John 18:36; Colossians 1:13).
 - 5. He taught the disciples the terms of admission (John 6:44-45; Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 10:32; John 3:3, 5).
- D. This is not the kind of kingdom men would envision. Men want a kingdom that gives them power, prestige, wealth, and pleasure; not one that measured greatness by service.

III. ***Jesus And God's Will***

- A. Jesus came to do the will of God (John 5:30). The will of God was always first and foremost in His mind, and it should be that way with us (Luke 11:28; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Philippians 2:13; 1 John 2:17).
- B. There are a number of "wills" that struggle for man's allegiance.
 - 1. Man must overcome his own will (Galatians 5:17).
 - 2. Man must not give in to the will of others (1 Peter 4:2).
 - 3. Man must struggle not to give in to the will of Satan (John 8:44).
- C. To do this we must know God's will (John 7:17). This requires study on our part and the strength necessary to apply it to our lives (2 Peter 1:5-8).

IV. *Jesus And Our Need For God's Providential Care*

- A. The individual is inadequate in and of himself for even the basics of life. Jesus said we need to trust God and depend on Him (Luke 12:22-31).
- B. The disciples in Jesus' day lived virtually one day at a time. It is good for us to thank God for the sustenance we receive (Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Everything, even our ability to work and earn food, comes from God (1 Corinthians 4:7; James 1:17).
- C. From the very beginning man has tried to elevate himself to the position of God, and His providential care is a lesson easily forgotten when wealth multiplies and self-sufficiency is portrayed as a virtue.

V. *Jesus And Forgiveness*

- A. God has given man certain responsibilities, and everyone has failed at some point to do them (Romans 3:23). Certainly no one would ever claim that they have fulfilled their duty perfectly -- without failure, without shortcomings, without sin. Everyone fails in his duty to himself, to others, and to God.
- B. Jesus came to forgive us of the debt of sin. His mission was to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). By coming to understand His divine justice and His divine love, one can see just how unique God's divine plan of salvation is for man.
- C. The fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, His virgin birth, His perfect life, His vicarious death, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension back to the Father speaks volumes about the uniqueness of this plan. There has never been such a plan, and there could never be such a plan unless it was divine in origin.

VI. *Jesus And Our Need For God's Spiritual Care*

- A. God has not left us without help concerning sin and temptation. He knows the difficulty that His people have in facing ethical choices every day. The teaching of Jesus shows us that we need God's help in resisting sin.
- B. As men came closer to God, they became aware of their sins (Isaiah 6:5), but this is not true with Christ. Jesus lived closer to God than anyone has ever lived and He was completely free from sin (1 Peter 2:21-23). His enemies failed to raise one instance of sin when Jesus asked them about His life (John 8:46). The purity of Christ is astonishing to all because He lived in unbroken communion with God.
- C. The request to not lead us into temptation does not suggest God causes temptation, but is a rhetorical way to ask for His protection from sin. Jesus shows us how to overcome the devil and temptation in a unique and powerful way. As we live, we follow His example of Jesus

in utilizing the power of the Bible (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). No matter what the temptation may be, we know that God will not allow us to be overwhelmed (1 Corinthians 10:13; cf. Genesis 39:7-9).

Conclusion. This sermon has sufficiently proven that the Lord's teaching is not the teaching of merely a great man, a moral philosopher, a gentle teacher striving to get others to love each other, or a social revolutionary trying to improve the conditions of the poor. The teaching of Christ is unique. It is above and beyond the ability of man, transcending man as far as its origin is concerned. The teaching of Christ is from God. This can be seen in part from the uniqueness of what Jesus taught and how it was taught.