

:21 Seconds to Change Your World “Jesus’ 21 Second Prayer” Believers Statesboro 11-05-17

There are a lot of really good prayers in the Bible. There are a lot of good examples of how to pray and I love them all, but there is only one prayer in the Bible that Jesus tells us directly to pray, saying this is how I want you to pray.

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye.

The prayer is found in the Gospel of Matthew, and in the protestant world it’s known as “The Lord’s Prayer” or some refer to it as “The Model Prayer of Jesus.” In the Catholic world it’s known as “The Our Father”, which makes sense, since it begins with “Our Father”.

Let’s say it together, using the King James Version, which most of us learned it from.

Matthew 6:9b-13 ... Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

It would seem that the Lord’s Prayer, this old classic, has lost a lot of its popularity in our day and time.

- Many of us may consider The Lord’s Prayer to be old school and out dated. Maybe some have pushed it aside because they see it part of the dead religion that they came out of.
- Those from a Catholic background may associated The Our Father with punishment or a form of penitence to get out of what you did wrong. “Father I have sinned.” “Cut the church grass and say 20 Our Fathers, and you will be forgiven.”

The Lord’s Prayer, however, is powerful and covers every aspect of our lives where we need the Lord’s help and blessings.

The title of this series is taken from Mark Rutland’s book, *:21 Seconds To Change Your World*, which I recommend. The title comes from the fact that it only takes about 21 seconds to say the prayer at a moderate rate. (Recite it in 21 seconds.) I have a friend from New Jersey who can say it about 18 seconds, but it takes my friend in Alabama about a minute and a half to get through it! Just joking.

Sweet 21 Seconds of Prayer

In the Garden of Gethsemane recorded in *Matthew 26:40*, Jesus asked His disciples, “can’t you pray with me for at least one hour?” We should be able to as well. It should truly be a “Sweet Hour of Prayer”, but let’s face it, as much as we would like to or need to most of us never spend an hour in prayer.

We often hear of great prayer heroes who prayed consistently hours at a time, but instead of encouraging us in prayer, we are often discouraged by that. We think, “To be a real Christian you must pray four hours a day!” People will say, “I can’t do that, so I’m out. Prayer is not for me.” Especially the men.

How about 21 Seconds of prayer? Can we do that?

I wish that all of us could pray one hour, or half an hour. I hope we all get there. But there is *no one* in *any church anywhere* that can’t pray 21 seconds.

Men you can do this! You can pray 21 seconds, once a day. Then, maybe you can pray the 21 Second Lord’s prayer 5 times a day, maybe 10 times a day.

How can a man become the priest in his home? You don’t have to be clever.

- A guy wants to lead his family in prayer and he knows that his wife is articulate, sensitive, and prayerful.
- Men feel like they are being judged by others and their family when they try to pray. They feel like as they pray, their family is in the background thinking, “God not what he said, but what we said.”

Men lead your family in the Lord’s Prayer, lead them in Psalms 23, read a passage of scripture and you will be the priest in your home. You may be able to think of a better prayer than Jesus did, but if you can’t beat Jesus’ prayer ... use His.

The Lord’s Prayer, after all is the ONLY prayer that Jesus taught us.

Some protest, “But Jesus isn’t teaching us a prayer, he is just teaching us a model prayer, a concept of prayer.” Both are true. We will look at some of the lessons Jesus is teaching us about prayer in The Lord’s Prayer next Sunday. If the Lord’s Prayer is your frame work to lead you into deeper intercessory prayer, great! On the other hand, if 21 seconds is just a place for you to start praying, **START THERE!**

In this series we are going to compare two wonderfully powerful prayers and learn from them. Not only will we look at The Lord’s Prayer, but we will explore Psalms 23 as well. Today I want us to see some differences and some similarities between the two. So, let’s say Psalms 23 together too.

Psalms 23 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Next Life Step: I will read Psalm 23 once a day for the next seven days.

Two Jewish Prayers

Both texts were written by Jewish men, from the same village of Bethlehem. The 23 Psalm was written by David born 1000 years before Christ Jesus taught His Disciples The Lord's Prayer.

Both prayers are Jewish Prayers. The odd thing is that David's Psalm is very Christian and Jesus' prayer is very Jewish.

- Most Jewish writings and prayers are plural, the people of God, God of the people, God of Israel.
- But the 23 Psalm is very personal. The Lord is my Shepherd. He makes me lie down, he leads me to still waters. It has the feel of the Christian classic, "He walks with me and He talks with me and the tells me I am his own."
- Psalms 23 is the most well know biblical reference in the Gentile world and very seldom used in Jewish religious gatherings.
- The Lord's prayer, however is very Jewish. It all plural. Our Father. Give us our daily bread, forgive us, lead us, we, our, it's a very rabbinical prayer in form.

Psalms 23 is very Christian and The Lord's Prayer very Jewish.

Both begin with the "ISNESS" of God

Both begin with what Bible Scholars call the "ISNESS" OF GOD.

Psalms 23 - The first three words of Psalms 23 is all you need! **The LORD IS!**

No matter what happens in life, the ups the downs, the good, the bad, all the brutality and harshness that the world can throw at you, to face it, all you need is to say is "Yes, I see all that, but The Lord IS!"
"The Lord is" is your answer to the craziness of our universe!

The Lord's Prayer - Our Father "Which Art". Our Father who "is".
Both begin with a statemen of the reality of God.

Both end with Forever

Psalms 23 – *"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*

The Lord's Prayer - *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.*

Both prayers begin with the **reality** of God and both prayers end the **eternity** of God and in between is the answer to the reality if every human experience. Protection, providence, power, deliverance, healing and forgiveness.

Both are very relevant prayers for 21 Century people! In our world today, who doesn't need to pray "deliver us from evil". I will pray Psalms 23 and The Lord's Prayer over me, over my family, my church, and my city!

The heart and soul of both devotional classics

If you asked people what the main theme of Psalms 23, most would probably say, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;"*. They would say that because it is the most poetic part of the text. It is encouraging and comforting.

But the heart and soul of Psalms 23 is *"He restoreth my soul."* If you take every other word out of Psalms 23 and you only had the 1st four words of the vs 3 "He restores my soul", that's the heart of the Psalm.

- David was a man who understood something about soul restoration.
- The same David that wrote Psalms 23 also wrote Psalms 51.
- Nobody understands soul restoration as much as person who needs it and finds it.

We all need soul restoration, just from the abuse, nicks and dings of life! Harsh words wear at our souls resulting in dysfunctional souls leading to wounded beat up dysfunctional lives.

He restores my soul is not in past tense, rather present tense operative. "He is" restoring my soul. In the same sense one doesn't say, "the sun will shine", but rather "the sun shines". The sun shines because that is what it does.

Jesus our shepherd is in the restoration business and He restores our souls, it is what God is doing in us, He is constantly restoring our souls!

How does that connect to the heart and soul of the lord's prayer?

We know what the heart and the soul of the Lord's prayer is, because it's the only part of the Lord's prayer that Jesus editorialized after He taught the disciples to pray the prayer.

*Matthew 6¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

The heart and soul of the Lord's Prayer is forgiveness.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Jesus is saying the heart of the Lord's Prayer is forgiveness and the heart of Psalms 23 is soul restoration. In other words, **there is no soul restoration without forgiveness.**

That's the membrane that connects these two devotional classics, written by two men who were 1000 years apart, who were born in the same village. An astonishing connection!

Jesus is saying I'm calling you into ongoing forgiveness, so that you can receive ongoing blessings and ongoing soul restoration. We choose to live in forgiveness, so that we can live in soul restoration.

You cannot have a restored soul unless you forgive.

In Earth or On Earth

Newer Bible versions of Matthew 6:10 will say, *"your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* In the KJV it says, *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Publicly when we say it, it's generally "in". When we sing it, it's "on".

We are not building a Theology around this! Both can be correct (Greek) NIV on / KJV in.

On earth has a planetary feel or a global appeal, let your kingdom come upon all the earth as it is in heaven That is a good prayer.

In earth, can't be planetary, we are not praying God's kingdom to come in the center of the globe. So how does the kingdom come in earth? What we are made of? Dirt. *Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

Let your kingdom come in me, earth, in my life, in my mouth, heart, thoughts etc.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (KJV) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Your kingdom come in me is a prayer to submission to God's Kingship. Incarnational Christianity!

Paralyzed in Prayer?

Have you ever been paralyzed in prayer? You just don't know what to pray or how to pray?

Some people come to a dark or confusing place in life and they just don't know what to pray. If that's you pray the prayer Jesus taught you pray. Pray the Lord's Prayer; pray it over and over again.

Stressed? Afraid? Times of fear and uncertainty, Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Pray The Lord's Prayer Daily

Pray the Lord's prayer daily.

- How many of you walk for exercise? If the prayer takes 21 seconds, how many times can you pray the Lord's Prayer when you walk a mile at a moderate pace?
- You can pray the Lord's Prayer before the shot clock runs out at a basketball game!

What if we prayed this prayer together, the whole church praying in unity, the same thing every day? What if we said it every day at noon, for the next seven days. You say, "I'm at work", it's only 21 seconds!

What if we prayed it 3 times a day, or 5 times a day for a week and added Psalms 23?

Say it at your table grace. – If it seems like a long prayer, remember its 21 seconds!

Pray it when you wake, before each meal, and when you go to bed. That's five times a day.

100 people praying 5 times a day would 500 times a day.

300 people, 1500 times a day. That would be 1500 prayers a day to the Father for His Protection, Providence, Power, Healing, and Forgiveness. How powerful would that be! There is power in that!

That's 21 Seconds To Change Your World.

Closing ILL: Close with the story of Mark Rutland in Under Grad School in Maryland. World Literature Class. It was in the 70's and he had a cool hip professor, but he was also an out spoken atheist non- practicing Jew. In the Poetry section of the class, a young lady asked him what is the greatest poem ever written. He immediately said, I know what it is." When pressed he said, it is the 23 Psalm. That shocked the class, until he told his story.

"Last year my 18-month old baby died of SIDS. We were angry, wounded, hurt, and nearly divorced over the funeral. My wife is a practicing catholic, I'm a lapsed, nonbelieving Jew. I didn't want some priest at the grave side service or some nun dressed in a black robe saying some mumbo jumbo over my dead baby's body. My wife said, then don't come."

When they lowered the casket into the ground and that priest read the 23 Psalm, for just a split second I knew there was a God. He said, at the grave of a dead baby if just for a moment, even for it never to appear again, but for a moment, if a catholic priest can read a poem written 3000 years ago and make a lapsed Jew believe in the God of Abraham, that's the greatest poem ever written.

Next Life Step: I will pray Jesus' 21 Second Prayer once a day for the next seven days.

Next Life Step: I will pray Jesus' 21 Second Prayer five times a day for the next seven days and change my world!

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. What are your past experiences with The Lord's Prayer? Do you still use it?
2. What do scholars mean by the "Isness" of God? Is God really enough?
3. Explain the heart and soul of The Lord's Prayer and Psalms 23. How do the two tie together?