

Understanding How to Pray

(Luke 11:1-4; Matt. 6:9-13)

When the disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray, the Lord opened widely the doors of heavens and made certain the entrance of all who desired to come to Him in prayer. The prayer the Lord taught the disciples starts by saying, "Our Father Who is in heaven." The prayer is directed to the Father. When we enter His presence, we draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in good time for every need (Heb. 4:16). We must enter His courts with praise, revering His name; proclaiming the Gospel to all nations ("Your kingdom come") and desiring His will to be effective in every aspect of life "on earth (in my life) as it is in heaven." The prayer then is directed to the basic necessity of life- our daily bread -food sufficient to sustain us.

In Proverbs 30:8-9 Agur prays, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me lest I be full and deny You and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal, and so profane the name of my God." This wonderful prayer is a prayer of contentment with a spiritual sense of obedience and the pursuit of holiness. Paul said, "Godliness accompanied with contentment is great and abundant gain, for we bought nothing into the world, and obviously we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing with these we shall be content" (I Tim. 6:6b-8).

YAHSHUA said, "Give us this day our daily bread". Not tomorrow's, but only today's; that is, supply the means for our sustenance "One day at the time". He said, "Do not worry and be anxious, saying, what are we going to have to eat? Or, what are we going to have to drink? Or, what are we going to have to wear? So do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:19, 31, 34). Having our needs supplied one day at the time encourages us to a renewed desire to seek Him to be the provider of our basic needs. And as the Bread of life YAHSHUA satisfies every spiritual need of the soul as well. We should desire Him daily as we desire bread to satisfy our physical needs. He said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these things taken together will be given you besides" (Matt. 6: 31).

In the desert when He was being tempted YAHSHUA resisted the devil with the words, "Man shall not live and be sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God", He was saying that He was the Bread of life, the sustainer of life, the Creator and all was controlled by Him. A wheat or barley loaf of bread will not sustain man outside His control. "Give us this day our daily bread" is a request that encompasses all our physical needs.

YAHSHUA lead us to pray asking for forgiveness, for it is a door of reconciliation with those who we haven't forgiven. Here He teaches us that without forgiving others we are not forgiven. So before entering His presence or the courts of heaven we must forgive, for us to find forgiveness with our Father and our prayers to be answered. "For if you forgive people their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses" (Matt. 6: 14, 15). A heart truly contrite before God will have the disposition to forgive. A prayer of contrition the Lord will not reject. Having been forgiven and have forgiven, we should pray the Lord not to abandon us to temptation, or allow us to be tempted to the extent of sinning against Him; pray for deliverance from the flaming missiles and attacks and assaults of the evil one. Paul writes, "For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin, no matter how it comes or where it leads) has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man; but God is faithful and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength or resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will also provide the way out, that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently" (I Cor. 10: 13). Holding to bitterness and anger we are giving a foothold for the devil to use it not only as a legal matter against us, but to exercise illegal rights over our life.

When YAHSHUA died, the curtains of the temple were torn from top to bottom. He opened heaven for all to come to Him in prayer. YAHSHUA took the position of our High Priest forever. He is a High Priest Who "understands and sympathizes and has a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb. 4:15). He set for us the best example of forgiveness when He forgave those who were killing Him. He is at right hand of His Father interceding for us. He is also our advocate pleading our cause. Satan has legal matters against us, but in the courts of heaven YAHSHUA takes our case

before the Judge and defends us. Satan is reminded that every believer is acquitted and set free from the consequences of sin because YAHSHUA paid the price in full and nailed to the cross the legal issues and announced to all to hear that it was finished. But the forgiveness of YAHSHUA does not give us the right to remain in the old life style satisfying the fleshly desires. It is not a license to sin. It is a call to live a holy life in denying self and in carrying our cross to follow Him.

Entering the Courts of Heaven

It is a common way for some of us to enter the courts of heaven battling the devil and blaming him for our trials. We bind him and rebuke him in ignorance of the rights we have given him by the way we have lived our life of disobedience to God. In the format of the Lord's Prayer there is no indication we should take our prayers to the battlefield first. The order we see is as follows:

- (1) Praise
- (2) Submission
- (3) Petition
- (4) Repentance, forgiveness
- (5) Deliverance

We must take our burdens, our frustrations, our trials to the courts of heaven to make things right with God by confessing and repenting of our sins, before we take on the devil, in order to be released from legal issues Satan has against us. John says, "If anyone should sin, we have an Advocate with the Father – YAHSHUA the Messiah and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for the whole world" (I John 2:1-2); "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Every time we give Satan a foothold, we give him room for his strongholds. As an accuser of our soul, he takes our weaknesses as legal issues to God our Judge to bring a lawsuit against us. Peter said that the devil is seeking someone to devour because he hates us and is against the rights we have as children of God. YAHSHUA gave an example of illustration concerning the courts of heaven in the parable of a widow, who kept coming to a judge asking for protection and defense and justice against her adversary (Luke 18: 1- 8). She did not go to her enemy to complain, but to the judge who vindicated her from her enemy. YAHSHUA concluded by saying, "And will not God defend and protect and avenge His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He defer them and delay help on

their behalf? I tell you, He will defend and protect and avenge them speedily” (vv.7, 8).

Satan wants to take you and me to trial every time we sin against God. He wants God to remove our rights as His children, by his accusations. When he asked YAHSHUA to sift Peter as wheat, he was asking YAHSHUA to take Peter to trial. But YAHSHUA said, I went to court for you, Peter, (I prayed for you). He will do the same for us today. Let’s enter the courts of heaven with contrite hearts to receive forgiveness and to dismantle the illegal right Satan wants to have over us. “Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will see the Lord, exercise foresight and be on the watch to look to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God’s grace, in order that no root of resentment shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment and the many become contaminated and defiled by it” (Heb. 12:14-15). We will be able to resist the devil only by submission to God. He is our strength, our deliverer, our vindicator against the enemy of our soul. The court of heaven is a good place to go to receive victory.