

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 12TH–13TH, 2026 // PRAYER & COMMUNION

PRAYER (MATTHEW 7:7–11) THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5–7 is one of the most pivotal passages in the Bible and Jesus' longest recorded teaching. This sermon defines the values of God's Kingdom and gives simple instruction on how we are to live.

- **Professing Christianity is claiming we follow the instruction and example of Christ.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING TO OUR FATHER

In Matthew 7:7–11, Jesus emphasizes the goodness of the Father and how it is imperative that His children communicate with Him.

- **When we don't talk to our Father, we don't seek the right things and, in turn, "find" the wrong things. Without prayer, doors stay closed, and we don't have what we need.**

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Simply put, prayer is talking to God. Evil people have no desire to talk to God (Psalm 10:4) but professing Christians should have a natural desire to pray.

- In prayer, we find **forgiveness** of sin (1 John 1:9), **God's favor** (Hebrews 11:6), rest (Matthew 11:28), **joy**, and **security** (Philippians 4).

SOME OTHER REASONS WE SHOULD PRAY

- 1) We should find it **an honor** to be able to speak with our Creator/Savior.
- 2) We should desire and enjoy talking with Jesus and **building our relationship**.
- 3) Along with Scripture, **we find His will**.
- 4) It **aligns our hearts and minds** with His.
- 5) It keeps us **humble** and **dependent** on Him.

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

Matthew 6:9–13 gives us a template of sorts for prayer. Jesus isn't telling us to repeat His words exactly but to let His example guide us.

- The Lord's Prayer models to us a focus on **thanking God, seeking His will**, asking for **forgiveness, forgiving others**, and asking for His **provision** and **protection**.

We must have a consistent prayer life (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We may have casual conversations with God, but we must also make intentional prayers of **praise and repentance, praying for another** and then **our personal needs**.

- We teach the **P.R.A.Y.** acronym to help us cover all our bases when we pray.

THE PROPER MOTIVE BEHIND PRAYER

Prayer doesn't change the mind of God, and our intent shouldn't be to conform Him to our desires, but to **seek His will and submit to it**. Prayer is the vessel by which we do this.

- Philippians 2:3 tells us to "do nothing out of selfish ambition," and prayer is no different. **We pray for God's will and His mindset.**

WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

James 5:16 says, **"the prayer of a righteous person is very powerful."** This means not everyone's prayers are equal.

- When we have unaddressed sin in our lives, it impedes the effectiveness of our petitions to God because **His first desire is for our salvation**.

WHEN DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

John 14:13 says, **"Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it."** Jesus doesn't answer all prayers, but whatever we pray in His will, we receive.

- **Righteous people evolve to think more like God. In this, we seek His will, pray for what He wants, and receive it.**

COMMUNION (1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–32)

WHERE COMMUNION BEGAN

Jews celebrated Passover: the liberation and Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. The meal began with a cup of wine, which was blessed by giving thanks for God's provision.

- Often a host would give his cup to an honored guest, but **Jesus shared His cup with everyone at the table**.

WHY WE USE UNLEAVENED BREAD

The bread during Passover reminded the Jews that when they left Egypt, there wasn't time for the bread to rise from yeast (Deuteronomy 16:3), and God told them to make bread without yeast to remember the Exodus.

- In Luke 22:19, Jesus says, **"This is my body...do this in remembrance of Me."**

WHY WE USE "WINE" IN COMMUNION

During Passover, four cups of wine were drunk in intervals as they sang Psalms and remembered Ex. 6:6–8. **Wine symbolized freedom and deliverance to the Promised Land.**

- Like the bread, **Jesus is essentially saying in Luke 22:20, "I am the One who gives you freedom. Remember Me."**

COMMUNION IS HIGHLY SYMBOLIC

The broken bread symbolizes the agonizing torture and abuse Jesus suffered for us, and the cup pouring out the juice reminds us of **the blood poured out by Christ for our sins**.

- When we choose to take Communion, we are professing our trust that only Christ, through His body and blood, can save us.

Like the elements entering our body, **we must allow the Spirit of God to reside in us**.

We must rest in Him so we can recharge and be able to engage the world around us.

- We share in the redemption of the cross. We're recipients of grace and the promise of salvation and eternity with our Creator.

The disciples taking communion with Christ demonstrated an expectation of a **unified body** of Believers anticipating His return.

- The Last Supper was a time of looking forward to two goals: **the cross and the final feast the followers of Jesus will have with Him in Heaven** (Luke 14:15–24).

THREE VIEWS ON COMMUNION

- **Transubstantiation** (Catholic): The elements literally become the body and blood of Jesus.
- **Consubstantiation** (Lutheran): A blend of literal and figurative. Christ "coexists" with the elements.
- **Symbolic** (Protestant): The elements are a **tangible reminder of Christ's cross, death, resurrection, and distribution of the Holy Spirit**.

IS THERE A RIGHT OR WRONG WAY?

There is little said about Communion in the Bible, but there is an important instruction in 1 Corinthians 11:26–29 on how we are to take it.

- We must have **repentant hearts and "examine" ourselves** because **if we take Communion in an "unworthy manner," we bring judgment on ourselves**.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB (REV. 19)

Communion now reminds us of the communion to come. One day we will sit at a glorious banquet in Heaven with our Christian family and our great Host, Jesus Christ.

- **It's a reminder that the pain of this life is not forever but will one day be exchanged for eternal joy!**

PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL

- It is amazing that we are invited to talk with our Creator, and we would be fools not to accept His invitation.
- It is imperative that we have a **prayer life**: pray in the **morning**, pray **before bed**, **write down prayers**, use the **P.R.A.Y. acronym**, and **casually touch base with Christ**.

COMMUNION IS A SACRED AND SPECIAL TIME

- **Communion** is a great opportunity to **meditate on the goodness of God**, the **hope** we have in Christ, and **what He has done for us!**
- It is also something that should be taken with great **reverence** because of the sacrifice and salvation it represents.

CHANGING OUR MINDSET

- Our faith is not to be mindless, mechanical religion or selfish, flippant emotionalism.
- We only have one life on this earth, and it is often difficult to navigate. But **we have been given the opportunity to connect to God through His Son so we can live fulfilling lives as we anticipate eternity**.