

Personal prayer

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[0 : 00] Together is all ages. We don't mind noise. We love noise. We're a church family. But if you want to go somewhere quieter at all at any point during the service, there's a Christ room just in the back there. You can hear the service in their tea.

And this morning after our service, we have together a church picnic. That's going to be happening at Preston Park. So we'll stay and have teas and coffees as usual. And then we'll take our lunches to the park.

If you don't have food with you, it may well be people have food to share around all those shops nearby or in the middle of Brighton, which is a blessing.

Friends, his name is Jamie. Some of you have been able to meet him this year in different ways. He was at Bible by the Beach. Some of you met him there. Some of you met him at my wedding, which is where this photo is taken. And Jamie is my best friend, one of my closest friends.

But let me tell you something. It's not a secret. There was a time when Jamie and I didn't know each other. There was a time when we weren't friends. But then, 24 years into life, I met him for the first time. And how we became friends was we started speaking to each other.

[1 : 29] We started asking each other questions. We started spending time with each other. And as that happened, we became friends. So Jamie and I weren't friends, but then we were. And we became friends through speaking to each other.

And this morning, we're thinking about a relationship that we have with someone else. We have a relationship with God. And the way we get to know God and the way God gets to know us is Him speaking to us in the Bible.

And we've heard about that. We've heard about the Bible, this book that we get a hold in our hands. We heard about that last week. It's a great thing that we get to read God's words when He speaks to us in them.

But this morning, we're going to think about how we get to speak to God. Because good relationships work when both people speak to one another. And our relationship with God works best when we hear Him speaking and when we speak to Him too.

And we can do that. So that's what we're thinking about this morning. And I think it's worth us pausing just for a moment and thinking about how amazing it is that we get to speak to God.

[2 : 56] Because, you know, God is not like us. God is amazing. I wonder, what do we know about God?

Here's some things that I thought of. He is just. He's full of justice. He is holy. There is no sin in Him. We sin.

But God doesn't. He is the creator. The creator of this whole world. He is love. He is the best love.

He is love. He's eternal. He lives forever and ever and ever. He is king. He is king.

He rules this world. He is mighty. He is great. And you can add many, many more things to that list. God is amazing.

[3 : 52] God is amazing. And isn't it amazing then that we get to speak to Him in prayer. We get to speak to the king of the universe, the creator of this world.

We get to speak to Him in prayer. And Jesus here in this passage that Anya has read for us teaches us how to do that.

And He offers some advice to us. Which I think we should listen to in verse 5 to 8 about how to pray and how not to pray. So, here is a prayer for you.

That I am going to ask your feedback on. Father God, thank you so much that you see me praying here and all these people in front of me see me pray to.

Amen. Amen. Is that a good prayer to pray? Why is that not a good prayer to pray? It's all about me. I'm doing it because I want you to see me pray.

[4 : 58] And Jesus says here, that's not right. That's not how to pray. He says, when you pray, don't be like people called the hypocrites.

There in verse 5. They love to pray standing on the street corners to be seen by others. They love to stand up and show people, look how great I am.

Look how amazing my knowledge of God is. That's not the right way to pray. You'd be better off going into your bedroom and closing the door, Jesus says.

And praying in that way. We don't pray so that others can see us and think, look how good they are. We're praying because we simply want to talk to God in prayer. Now it's good that we can gather as a church to pray. It was great that the Pearsons led us in prayer.

[6 : 01] It's great that we can have prayer meetings and pray with one another. But if we're doing those things so that others can think, wow, look how great they are.

Then we shouldn't be praying. If that's our motivation. Jesus says pray because you want to speak to your Father.

And you want to speak with others to your Father in heaven. That's what we want to do when we gather here. We're just simply helping each other talk to God and joining in with that privilege.

So Jesus gives us some advice on prayer there. Don't be doing it so that lots of other people can see you and be impressed by you. Do it because you want to talk to God.

Now we're going to see two big things. There's lots of things we can see in this passage. We're going to see two big things. The first one is this. Who do we pray to?

[7 : 01] Then we'll sing a song. And then we'll think, what can we pray? What do we pray? So who we pray to. And it's there in verse 9.

Jesus says, this then is how you should pray. Our Father. Jesus says, pray to our Father.

Now hang on a minute. We've thought about how great and awesome God is. He's the creator of the world. He's the king who rules it.

And Jesus says we can pray to him as our Father. That's amazing. That means that we get to pray to someone who knows us by name.

Who loves you as his own. And who is ready to listen to you. See, praying to God is not like what I did some years ago.

[8 : 07] Does anyone know where this is? Oh, Samuel. Where's this? Number 10 Downing Street. And who lives at number 10 Downing Street, Isaac?

Rishi Sunak. He's the prime minister at the moment. But back when I was in year 6 at school, it was Tony Blair.

And I wrote a letter to him in year 6 because me and my year were putting on a big school play. And we were asked to write a letter to someone famous and invite them to our school play to see if they would come.

So I sat there in my class and wrote a letter to Tony Blair, who was the prime minister who lived at this place. And I wrote a letter and I said, dear Tony Blair, we're having a school play.

It was a performance of Charlotte's Web. And it's happening at this day and at this time. We would love you to come as our special guest. And so I wrote on the envelope and we posted them.

[9 : 20] And a few weeks later, I got a reply. I came home from school to a letter which at the envelope said 10 Downing Street on it. And I was like, wow, the prime minister is going to come to my school play.

And so excitedly opened the letter. And it wasn't from the prime minister at all. It was someone who worked at this place, 10 Downing Street.

And it said, unfortunately, the prime minister is very busy. I'm sure if he had time, he would like to come, but he can't. In other words, the prime minister didn't read my letter, doesn't have time for me, he probably doesn't know my name.

And I was very sad. But praying is not like me writing a letter to the prime minister. Praying is praying to someone who does know our name, who loves us, who wants to listen to us, who cares about everything you do, even being in year six and doing a school play.

But that word father, I guess for some of us, will be a difficult word. For some of us, it's a great word. We know our dads.

[10:42] We love our dads. They're like the best people. But some of us have really hard relationships with our dads. Some of us may not know if our dads actually love us.

Maybe we don't feel like we can talk to our dads. Maybe we don't even know our dads. But I want to assure you, from what we know about God in the Bible, he is the best father.

He's better than the best fathers here on earth. And he's so much better than those who are not good fathers. And he's a father who has such great love for his children.

It's important, I think, to think, who are God's children? Because it's not everybody. God's children are those who have come to know him through Jesus, his son.

Jesus, his son, who's died on the cross for our sin. Died in our place so that we can know forgiveness from God the Father, who loves to forgive people like us, even though we do wrong things that he doesn't like.

[12:01] And if we're trusting in Jesus to do that for us, we can be known as children of God. And here's a wonderful verse from the Bible, one of my favorites. It says, See what great love the Father has lavished, the Father has poured on us, that we should be called children of God.

And that is what we are. That is what we are if we're trusting in Jesus to forgive us our sin. So who we get to pray to is our Father.

And it says a bit more about our Father. It says where he is. It says that he is our Father who is in heaven. Our Father is in heaven.

Heaven is his home. Heaven is where he lives. He's everywhere, but he's in heaven. And the thought that God is in heaven reminds us that God is on a throne in heaven.

Jesus said that in the chapter before this, in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 34. He says that heaven, it is God's throne.

[13:17] And so when Jesus says our Father in heaven, it reminds us that our Father, that we get to talk to in prayer if we're children of God, he is on a throne.

He is king. He's a king. He's a king in heaven. And so get this. When we become children of God, we get to talk to the king of the world.

And we get to call him Father. It's a bit like what this guy here does. Who's this? Anyone know who this is? Samuel again.

You know. Who is it? No. No. It's not Boris Johnson. No, it's not. Good work. It's someone in that kind of realm of things.

Bethany, do you know who it is? It is Prince William. Good job, Bethany. This is Prince William. And who's his dad? Does anyone know who Prince William's dad is?

[14:23] Lilia. King Charles. It is. Prince William is one of two people in the world who get to pick up his phone and click call on dad and say, Hi, dad.

It's me. Everyone else in this room, everyone else in this country, we know him as the king of England. But he gets to talk to him as his dad.

And for us, when we're praying, I think we get to do better than Prince William. We don't just get to talk to the king of Great Britain. No, we get to talk to the king of the world, the king of the universe. And we get to say, Father. And we can do that at any time, in any place. We're invited to call the king of the universe, Father.

And we can know that he knows us by name. He loves us as his own. And he is ready to listen to our prayers.

[15:40] We're going to see more. We're going to see about kind of what we can pray and the rest of this prayer in a moment. But before we do that, we're going to sing again. We're going to sing this really lovely song about Jesus and about how we can come to him.

We can come to God, the Father, in prayer. We can come to Jesus to you. Jesus, who is strong and kind. So, as Aaron leaves us, let's stand and sing together.

Jesus said that if I first, I should come to him. No one else that's satisfied, I should come to him.

Jesus said that if I am weak, I should come to him. No one else can be my strength.

I should come to him. For the Lord is good and faithful. He will keep us day and night.

[17:07] We can always run to Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, strong and kind. Jesus said that if I fear, I should come to him.

No one else can be my shield. I should come to him. For the Lord is good and faithful.

He will keep us day and night. We can always run to Jesus.

Jesus, strong and kind. Jesus said that if I am lost, he will come to me.

And he showed me on that cross, he will come to me. For the Lord is good and faithful.

[18 : 28] He will keep us day and night. We can always run to Jesus. Jesus, strong and kind.

So we have seen that we're invited to call the king of the universe, our father.

Father. Father. And we can speak to him. And as we do, we know that he knows us by name. We're his children. He loves us as his own.

And he's ready to listen to our every word. And so what can we talk to him about? Well, we can talk to him about anything and everything. But Jesus gives us some very helpful ways of praying and some helpful things to pray for.

And the first one is this. We can pray for God's name to be honored. That's what Jesus means when he says, pray our father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

[19 : 46] Hallowed be your name. Pray that our father's name would be honored. I want to tell you about a boy that I met this summer on the camp that I was helping on.

He bought a book on the bookstore. It was the second part of a series of novels that he's been reading. It was this book. And he was really excited that he could read it.

He loved the first one. Couldn't wait for the next one. And so he was excited to tell me that he was going to read that before he went to bed that night. The next day, he came up to me and said, Daniel, Daniel, you know this book that I bought?

Well, look here on the back. And so I had a look. And he said, he pointed to one of the quotes on the back of the book. And he said, that's my dad.

That's my dad who said that. That's my dad on the back of the book. He was so proud that his dad's name was on that book. And I think that's a good picture of what we're doing when we're praying to our father in heaven and saying, hallowed be your name.

[21 : 02] We're praying that our father's name would be on it. We're praying that people in this world would think about our God and say, wow, what a name.

We're praying that God would use us to show people that, you know, this creation around us. Well, that's my father that's made that.

And you can know him. You can honor him as king. There's lots of people in the world that sadly don't do that. They use God's name as a swear word.

They don't honor his name. But we can pray that God would be changing people's hearts so that people can honor him. So that we can see more and more people thinking, well, that's my father, that's God, and I want to honor his name.

So Jesus says, pray that God's name would be honored as we say, hallowed be your name.

Second thing that we can pray for.

[22 : 19] Pray for God's kingdom to grow. Pray for God's kingdom to grow. That's what we're asking when we pray this line in verse 10.

Your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. Would your kingdom grow? Jesus came to this world to preach the good news of the kingdom of God.

To preach the good news that people can become children of God. Can know God who is in heaven as their father. And when Jesus says, pray your kingdom would come, we're praying that that kingdom would grow, that more people would bow their knee to King Jesus, that more people would know their sins forgiven.

And I think this prayer and that first one, hallowed be your name, are good prayers for us to pray for this city that we live in.

For the city of Brighton and Hove. Let's pray. Let's pray. Please, Father, would your name be honored in Brighton and Hove and would your kingdom grow so that more people can come to know you, my Father.

[23 : 35] So that more people can honor you, my Father. So hallowed be your name, praying that God's name would be honored, praying that God's kingdom would grow.

And next, we're asking for God's will to be done. It's what Jesus goes on to say. Your kingdom come. Verse 10, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You know what? Your mums and dads, they know lots of things. They really do. But they don't know everything.

And sometimes in life, you might come to them with a problem. And they might not know how to fix it. Or they might think they know how to fix it, but it might not work.

They don't always know what is best. They're going to try and help you. They love you. But they won't always know. But praying to God, we're praying to a Father who does know best.
[24 : 41] And when we pray your will be done, we can know that even if we think we really do know what's best, actually God really does know what's best.

He knows everything about the future. He knows exactly what's going to happen tomorrow. And so we can pray. We pray. Your will be done.

And trust that God does know what is best. We pray to God then saying, I want your name to be honoured.

I want your kingdom to grow. And I want your will. And I want your will, your way to be done.

Because you know what's best. And I trust you with that.

And those three things, they're all about God. And that's surprising. That's surprising to me because I know that when I pray, I'm very quick to say, Father in heaven, I pray this for myself, this, this.

[25 : 50] I pray about them, and I don't stop to pray about God and his work in the world. I'm not very good at doing that straight away.

And I think that's probably true of all of us. But we're learning to pray. And as we're learning to pray, we need to hear what Jesus says. And Jesus starts this prayer by praying all about God's work in this world.

And so that would be a good way for us to start our prayers. Pray about God. Pray, praise God.

Pray that his name would be honoured. His work would grow.

His kingdom would grow. And that his will would be done. And then we can pray about ourselves and other people because Jesus does talk about that too.

So in verse 11, Jesus says, give us today our daily bread. Now these next few things, I think they're all about the things we really need in life.

[26 : 54] And he starts with food. And that really appeals to me. He starts with praying that we would have everything we need, including our daily food, our daily bread.

And bread is a symbol of a basic food that hopefully everybody should have. Certainly everybody needs food.

And bread's a good food to have. But Jesus is using that as a way for us to pray for everything.

Trusting God that God would provide everything we need day by day. Our food. Our shelter. Everything we need.

Water. Family. because just like a good dad might provide for his family for his children everything that they need clothes to wear food on the table a home to live in so we can trust our heavenly father to provide everything we need each day and so when we pray to our father we can trust him for that and we can pray please help me give me everything i need today so our daily bread next our sins to be forgiven our sins to be forgiven that's what jesus says in verse 12 and forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors so jesus doesn't actually use the word sins here but that's what he's talking about because when we sin it's like we owe a debt to god i was actually going to use phil in this example but phil's not here um phil is our pastor if you don't know uh who phil is um but we'll use him anyway um now imagine uh phil came to me one day and said that daniel i i need five pounds can you lend me five pounds and so i give phil five pounds and he takes it away he owes me a debt of five pounds and i think phil can pay five pounds back to me at some point i'll trust him with that but then he comes to me uh a few months later after he's paid off that five pounds and says that daniel i need to borrow a hundred pounds so i think well i think phil can pay back a hundred pounds i give him a hundred pounds and so that means he owes me a debt of a hundred pounds and he manages to pay that off but then he comes to me and says that daniel you're you're a generous guy um can you give me 10 million pounds i didn't know i was that rich but i give him 10 million pounds to borrow and that means he now owes me a debt of 10 million pounds i'm not sure that phil would be able to pay off 10 million pounds he might be able to you and but he's not here to tell me whether he can or not um so he now owes me a debt of 10 million pounds that's a lot of money but don't worry because i know that there's there's someone rich in brighton maybe he lives down the road i don't know but he owns brighton ho football club and his name is tony bloom and so he comes in the room and he says don't worry don't worry phil that i've got it here's a check of 10 million pounds i've paid it there you go daniel and that's that's what it's like to have our sins forgiven by god because each one of us we we sin and god hates sin he's holy he is pure he is perfect and he can't stand sin and so somehow we need our sin our debt of sin sorted out but we can't pay that because we we sin and we can't do anything to erase that um that's not an alarm is it um probably

