

Outline of the Messages for the Thanksgiving Conference

November 26-29, 2009

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE PRAYER OF THE AGE

Message Three

The Prayer That Expresses God's Will

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:18; Ezek. 36:37; Isa. 62:6-7; 1 John 5:14-16a; Matt. 6:5-6, 9-15; 26:39

Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Ezek. 36:37 Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

Isa. 62:6-7 Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, / I have appointed watchmen; / All day and all night / They will never keep silent. / You who remind Jehovah, / Do not be dumb; **7** And do not give Him quiet / Until He establishes / And until He makes Jerusalem / A praise in the earth.

1 John 5:14-16 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. **16** If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

Matt. 6:5-6 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. **6** But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Matt. 6:9-15 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; **10** Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. **14** For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; **15** But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.

Matt. 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You *will*.

- I. In the universe there are three wills: the divine will, the satanic will, and the human will; God wants man's will to be joined to Him and be one with Him so that man may express and echo His will back to Him in prayer for His good pleasure—Isa. 14:12-15; Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 26:39; Phil. 2:13:**

Isa. 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven, / O Daystar, son of the dawn! / How you have been hewn down to earth, / You who made nations fall prostrate! **13** But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north. **14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High. **15** But you will be brought down to Sheol, / To the uttermost parts of the pit.

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth.

Matt. 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt. 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You *will*.

Phil. 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure.

- A. The tree of life represents God with His divine will, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents Satan with his satanic will, and Adam represents man with his human will; we have lost many spiritual blessings because we have not expressed God's will, according to the principle of the tree of life, through our prayers—Gen. 2:9.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- B. A genuine man of prayer is one whose desires are fully blended into God's desires and whose thoughts are fully one with God's thoughts; he is a man in whom God's desires are imprinted, a man of revelation whose heart is a duplication of God's heart—1 Sam. 2:35; 3:21; 12:23.

1 Sam. 2:35 And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in My heart and in My mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he will go before My anointed continually.

1 Sam. 3:21 And Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh, for Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.

1 Sam. 12:23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray for you, but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

- C. Prayers that originate from our needs to satisfy our own lust may be answered by God, but they have no spiritual value, and we will become weak before His eyes and unpleasing to Him—Psa. 106:14-15; cf. Num. 11:18-35.

Psa. 106:14-15 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, / And tempted God in the desert. **15** And He gave them their request, / But He sent leanness into their soul.

Num. 11:18-35 And you shall say to the people, Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of Jehovah, saying, Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt. Therefore Jehovah will give you meat, and you shall eat. **19** You shall eat not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, **20** But a whole month, until it comes out from your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected Jehovah who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, Why did we ever come out of Egypt? **21** But Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand on foot; and You have said, I will give them meat so that they may eat a whole month. **22** Will flocks and herds be slain for them, to satisfy them? Or will all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to satisfy them? **23** And Jehovah said to Moses, Has Jehovah's hand become short? Now you will see whether My word will come to pass for you or not. **24** So Moses went out and told the people the words of Jehovah, and he gathered seventy, each one from the elders of the people, and set them around the tent. **25** And Jehovah came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and He took of the Spirit who was upon him, and put *Him* upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did not do *so* again. **26** But two men had remained in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. (Now they were among those who were registered, but they had not gone out to the tent.) And they prophesied in the camp. **27** And a certain young man ran and told Moses and said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. **28** And Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses, one of his chosen men, answered and said, My lord Moses, restrain them! **29** But Moses said to him, Are you jealous for my sake? Oh that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon them! **30** And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel. **31** And a wind went forth from Jehovah and brought quails from the sea and let *them* fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the earth. **32** And the people rose up all that day and all the night and all the next day, and they gathered the quail. He who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. **33** While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah struck the people with a very severe plague. **34** And the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah because there they buried the people who lusted. **35** From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

- D. Only the prayers that are initiated by God and echo what He has initiated have any spiritual value; we must learn to pray this kind of prayer—Eph. 6:18; Ezek. 36:37; Isa. 62:6-7; 1 John 5:14-16a.

Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Ezek. 36:37 Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

Isa. 62:6-7 Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, / I have appointed watchmen; / All day and all night / They will never keep silent. / You who remind Jehovah, / Do not be dumb; **7** And do not give Him quiet / Until He establishes / And until He makes Jerusalem / A praise in the earth.

1 John 5:14-16 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. **16** If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

- E. When we come to the Lord in prayer, we need to allow the Spirit to mingle our desires with His desires, lead our thoughts into His thoughts, and imprint His desires and thoughts into us; then the prayers that we utter to God with His inward desires will be precious, weighty, and valuable to Him and will cause Satan to suffer loss—Rom. 8:26-27; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2, 12; Mark 9:28-29; Eph. 6:10-20.

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

Phil. 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Col. 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

Mark 9:28-29 And when He entered into the house, His disciples questioned Him privately, Why were we not able to cast it out? **29** And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by any means except prayer.

Eph. 6:10-20 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength. **11** Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil, **12** For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of evil in the heavenlies. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness **15** And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace; **16** Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. **17** And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, **18** By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints, **19** And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel, **20** For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

F. The real meaning of prayer and of all spiritual work is that they consist of four steps:

1. God intends to do something according to His will.
2. He reveals His will to us through the Spirit for us to know His will.
3. We return and echo His will back to Him through prayer.
4. God accomplishes His work according to His will.

G. God needs man to exercise his spirit with his resurrected will to pray according to God's divine will for Christ to be manifested and enjoyed by us, for the Body life to be practiced by us, and for the Body of Christ to be built up through us—Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 1:4-6, 9, 11, 22b-23; 3:16-19; 4:16.

Heb. 10:5-10 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. **6** In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not delight. **7** Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God." **8** Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law), **9** He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second, **10** By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Rom. 12:1-2 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service. **2** And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Eph. 1:4-6 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, **5** Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, **6** To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;

Eph. 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph. 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Eph. 1:22-23 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, **23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 3:16-19 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, **17** That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are **19** And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

H. We have to pray according to God's desire and His will for the fulfillment of His economy; then we have the assurance that we have received what we have prayed for—Mark 11:22-26.

Mark 11:22-26 And Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God. **23** Truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says happens, he will have it. **24** For this *reason* I say to you, All things that you pray and ask, believe that you have received *them*, and you will have them. **25** And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your offenses. **26** But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in the heavens forgive your offenses.

II. Hannah's prayer was an echo, a speaking out, of the heart's desire of God; it was a human cooperation with the divine move for the carrying out of God's eternal economy—1 Sam. 1:10-20:

1 Sam. 1:10-20 And she was bitter in soul and prayed to Jehovah and wept much. **11** And she made a vow and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your female servant and remember me and not forget Your female servant, but give to Your female servant a male child, then I will give him to Jehovah for all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head. **12** And while she continued praying a long time before Jehovah, Eli watched her mouth. **13** And Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought that she was drunk. **14** And Eli said to her, How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine from you. **15** And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord. I am a woman oppressed in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before Jehovah. **16** Do not take your female servant for a worthless woman; for out of the greatness of my anxiety and provocation I have been speaking all this time. **17** Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your request that you have requested from Him. **18** And she said, Let your servant find favor in your sight. And the woman went her way; and she ate, and her countenance was *sad* no more. **19** And they rose up early in the morning and worshipped before Jehovah; and they returned and came to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and Jehovah remembered her. **20** And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son; and she called his name Samuel, For, *she said*, I asked for him of Jehovah.

- A. God could motivate Hannah as a person who was one with Him on the line of life; the line of life is a line that brings forth Christ for the enjoyment of God's people, that on earth God may have His kingdom, which is the church as the Body of Christ, the very organism of the Triune God—John 10:10; Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17-18; Eph. 1:22-23.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly.

Matt. 16:18-19 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **19** I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Rom. 14:17-18 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** For he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men.

Eph. 1:22-23 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, **23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

- B. As long as God can gain a person who is one with Him on the line of life, He has a way on earth; Hannah's prayer indicates that God's move with His answer to Hannah's prayer was to produce a Nazarite who was absolute for the fulfilling of God's desire—1 Sam. 1:19-2:11.

1 Sam. 1:19-2:11 And they rose up early in the morning and worshipped before Jehovah; and they returned and came to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and Jehovah remembered her. **20** And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son; and she called his name Samuel, For, *she said*, I asked for him of Jehovah. **21** And the man Elkanah went up with all his house to offer the yearly sacrifice to Jehovah and his vow. **22** But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, When the child is weaned, then I will bring him up, so that he may appear before Jehovah and stay there forever. **23** And Elkanah her husband said to her, Do what is good in your sight; stay until you have weaned him. Only, may Jehovah establish His word. So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she weaned him. **24** And as soon as she weaned him, she brought him up with her, along with three bulls and one ephah of flour and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of Jehovah in Shiloh, although the child was young. **25** And they slaughtered the bull and brought the child to Eli. **26** And she said, Oh, my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here by you, praying to Jehovah. **27** It was for this child that I prayed, and Jehovah has granted me my request that I requested from Him. **28** Therefore I, for my part, have lent him to Jehovah; all the days that he lives, he is lent to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there. **1** And Hannah prayed and said: / My heart exults in Jehovah; / My horn is exalted in Jehovah; / My mouth is enlarged against my enemies, / Because I rejoice in Your salvation. **2** There is none holy like Jehovah, / For there is none besides You; / Nor is there a rock like our God. **3** Talk no more so very proudly; / Do not let arrogance go forth from your mouth; / For Jehovah is a God of knowledge, / And actions are weighed by Him. **4** The bows of the mighty men are broken, / And those who stumbled are girded with strength. **5** Those who were full have hired themselves out for food, / And those who were hungry are not so any longer. / She who was barren has borne seven, / And she who had many children languishes. **6** Jehovah kills and makes alive; / He brings down to Sheol and brings up. **7** Jehovah makes poor and makes rich; / He makes low and also lifts up. **8** He raises the poor from the dust, / From the ash heap He lifts the needy, / That He may seat *them* with princes / And cause *them* to inherit the throne of glory. / For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, / And He has set the world upon them. **9** He will keep the feet of His faithful ones, / But the wicked will be silenced in darkness; / For not by strength shall any man prevail. **10** Those who strive with Jehovah will be shattered; / Against them He will thunder in heaven. / Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth; / And He will give strength to His king / And exalt the horn of His anointed. **11** And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child ministered to Jehovah before Eli the priest.

III. Elijah, "a man of like feeling with us,...prayed in prayer"—James 5:17 (lit):

James 5:17 Elijah was a man of like feeling with us, and he earnestly prayed that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

- A. A prayer from the Lord was given to Elijah, in which he prayed; he prayed in the prayer given to him by the Lord for the accomplishing of His will.
- B. He did not pray in his feeling, thought, intention, or mood, or in any kind of motivation, arising from circumstances or situations, to fulfill his own purpose.

IV. Daniel was a man of prayer who was joined to God's desire through God's word; only those who join themselves to God's word to pray prayers of God's economy can be of real use to God—Eph. 6:17-18; Dan. 9:2-3, 17:

Eph. 6:17-18 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, **18** By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Dan. 9:2-3 In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by means of the Scriptures the number of the years, which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *that is*, seventy years. **3** So I set my face toward the Lord God to seek *Him* in prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Dan. 9:17 And now hear, O our God, the prayer of Your servant and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that has been desolated, for the Lord's sake.

- A. The highest expression of a man who cooperates with God is in prayer; such a man is a man of preciousness to God, even preciousness itself—10:11, 19; 9:23.

Dan. 10:11 And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Dan. 10:19 And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

Dan. 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

- B. Daniel depended on prayer to do what man could not do, and he depended on prayer to understand what man could not understand—2:14-23; 6:10; 10:1-21.

Dan. 2:14-23 Then Daniel responded in counsel and with discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. **15** He answered and said to Arioch, the king's commander, Why is the decree from before the king so harsh? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. **16** Daniel then went in and sought from the king that he would give him a time to declare the interpretation to the king. **17** Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, **18** That they might request compassions from before the God of the heavens concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **19** Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of the heavens. **20** Daniel answered and said, Let the name of God / Be blessed from eternity to eternity, / For wisdom and might are His. **21** And it is He who changes the times and seasons; / He deposes kings and causes kings to ascend. / He gives wisdom to the wise / And knowledge to those who have understanding. **22** He reveals the deep things and the hidden things; / He knows what is *obscured* in the darkness, / And the light dwells with Him. **23** To You, O God of my fathers, I render thanks and praise, / For You have given me wisdom and might; / And You have now made known to me what we requested of You, / For You have made known the king's matter to us.

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had *always* done so previously.

Dan. 10:1-21 In the third year of Cyrus the king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the word was true and *concerning* a great distress. And he understood the word and had an understanding of the vision. **2** In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three full weeks. **3** I ate no desirable food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, until the three full weeks were completed. **4** And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the great river, that is, the Hiddekel, **5** I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz. **6** His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude. **7** And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; instead, a great dread fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves. **8** Thus I was left alone and I saw this great vision; and no strength was left in me, but my color turned deathly pale; and I retained no strength. **9** Yet I heard the sound of His words; and when I heard the sound of His words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. **10** And at that moment a hand touched me and sent me trembling on my knees and the palms of my hands. **11** And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. **12** And he said to me, Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand *this matter* and to afflict yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. **13** But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days; but now Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I remained there *alone* with the kings of Persia. **14** Thus I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the last days, yet the vision pertains to *something many days from now*. **15** And when he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face to the ground and was dumb. **16** And at that moment one who resembled the sons of men touched my lips; and I opened my mouth and spoke, and I said to him who stood before me, Sir, because of the vision my

anguish has turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. **17** For how can such a servant of my lord speak with such as my lord? For as for me, just now there is no strength in me, nor has there been breath left in me. **18** Then the one who was in appearance like a man touched me again and strengthened me; **19** And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me. **20** Then he said, Do you know why I have come to you? And now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia; so I go forth, and the prince of Javan is now about to come. **21** However I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who holds strongly with me against these ones except Michael your prince.

V. Abraham lived in intimate fellowship with God and became God's friend; even before the incarnation, Jehovah as Christ appeared to Abraham in human form, with a human body, and communed with him on a human level—Gen. 13:18; 18:1-2, 13-15, 22; James 2:23; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8:

Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

Gen. 18:1-2 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of *his* tent in the heat of the day. **2** And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw *them*, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth

Gen. 18:13-15 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? **14** Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15** Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God.

2 Chron. 20:7 Did You not, O our God, dispossess the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the seed of Abraham Your friend?

Isa. 41:8 But you, Israel, My servant, / Jacob, whom I have chosen, / The seed of Abraham My friend;

A. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God's heart's desire—Gen. 18:1-33; Rom. 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; Matt. 6:6.

Gen. 18:1-33 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of *his* tent in the heat of the day. **2** And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw *them*, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth **3** And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant. **4** Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. **5** And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said. **6** And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it*, and make cakes. **7** And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. **8** And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *them* before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. **9** And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent. **10** And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him. **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old *and* advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women. **12** And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? **13** And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? **14** Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15** Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh. **16** And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away. **17** And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? **19** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him. **20** And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! **21** I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know. **22** And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. **23** And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? **25** Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly? **26** And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake. **27** And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. **28** Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there. **29** And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty. **30** And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do *it* if I find thirty there. **31** And he said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the twenty. **32** And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the ten. **33** And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham

returned to his place.

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* in uncircumcision.

1 Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;

1 Tim. 2:8 I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;

Matt. 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

- B. As Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom—Gen. 18:9-22:

Gen. 18:9-22 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent. **10** And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him. **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old *and* advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women. **12** And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? **13** And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? **14** Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15** Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh. **16** And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away. **17** And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? **19** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him. **20** And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! **21** I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know. **22** And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

1. This shows that God's intention is to work Christ into us, to bring Christ forth through us, and to destroy the "Sodom" in our home life, our work life, and our Christian and church life—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 5:7-8.

Gal. 1:15-16 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, **16** To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal. 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

1 Cor. 5:7-8 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed. **8** So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

2. In our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ—Gen. 18:14-15; 21:2-7; Luke 18:27.

Gen. 18:14-15 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15** Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

Gen. 21:2-7 And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. **3** And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. **4** And Abraham circumcised Isaac his son when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. **5** And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. **6** And Sarah said, God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me. **7** And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.

Luke 18:27 But He said, The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.

- C. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor—Gen. 18:17-22; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30.

Gen. 18:17-22 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? **19** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him. **20** And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! **21** I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will

know. **22** And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Isa. 59:16 And He saw that there was no man, / And He was appalled that there was no intercessor. / Therefore His arm accomplished salvation for Him, / And His righteousness sustained Him.

Ezek. 22:30 And I sought a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the breach before Me for the sake of the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.

D. Genesis 18 presents a clear revelation of the basic principles of intercession:

Gen. 18:1-33 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of *his* tent in the heat of the day. **2** And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw *them*, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth **3** And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant. **4** Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. **5** And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said. **6** And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it*, and make cakes. **7** And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. **8** And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *them* before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. **9** And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent. **10** And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him. **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old *and* advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women. **12** And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? **13** And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? **14** Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15** Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh. **16** And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away. **17** And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? **19** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him. **20** And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! **21** I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know. **22** And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. **23** And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? **25** Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly? **26** And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake. **27** And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. **28** Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there. **29** And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty. **30** And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do *it* if I find thirty there. **31** And he said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the twenty. **32** And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the ten. **33** And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

1. The proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God's revelation; thus, it expresses God's desire and carries out God's will—vv. 17, 20-21; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25.

Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

Gen. 18:20-21 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! **21** I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Gen. 19:27-29 And Abraham rose up early in the morning *and went* to the place where he had stood before Jehovah. **28** And he looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the plain. And as he looked, there it was: the smoke of the land was going up like the smoke of a furnace. **29** And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities among which Lot dwelt.

Psa. 27:4-8 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple. **5** For He will conceal me in His shelter / In the day of trouble; / He will hide me in the hiding place of His tent; / He will raise me up upon a rock. **6** And now my head is lifted up / Above my enemies who surround me. / And I will offer in His tent / Sacrifices of shouts of joy: / I will sing and psalm to Jehovah. **7** Hear, O Jehovah, when I call with my voice, / And be gracious to me and answer me. **8** When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

2. Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 14:12; 18:23; 19:1, 27-29), showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.

Gen. 14:12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his possessions and departed, for he was dwelling in Sodom.

Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Gen. 19:1 And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. And when Lot saw *them*, he rose up to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground.

Gen. 19:27-29 And Abraham rose up early in the morning *and went* to the place where he had stood before Jehovah. **28** And he looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the plain. And as he looked, there it was: the smoke of the land was going up like the smoke of a furnace. **29** And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities among which Lot dwelt.

3. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God—18:22-33.

Gen. 18:22-33 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. **23** And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? **25** Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly? **26** And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake. **27** And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. **28** Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there. **29** And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty. **30** And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do *it* if I find thirty there. **31** And he said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the twenty. **32** And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it*, because of the ten. **33** And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

4. Intercession is according to God's righteous way; in Abraham's intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace; he challenged God according to His righteous way—vv. 23-25; Rom. 1:17.

Gen. 18:23-25 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? **25** Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?

Rom. 1:17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, "But the righteous shall have life and live by faith."

5. Abraham's intercession did not terminate with his speaking but with God's, showing that genuine intercession is God's speaking in our speaking—Gen. 18:33; Rom. 8:26-27.

Gen. 18:33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

VI. The pattern of prayer that the Lord taught the disciples in Matthew 6 is the prayer that expresses God's will—vv. 9-15:

Matt. 6:1-34 But take care not to do your righteousness before men in order to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. **2** Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. **3** But you, when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. **4** So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. **5** And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. **6** But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. **7** And in praying do not babble empty words as the Gentiles do; for they suppose that in their multiplicity of words they

will be heard. **8** Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows the things that you have need of before you ask Him. **9** You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; **10** Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. **14** For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; **15** But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses. **16** And when you fast, do not be like the sullen-faced hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so that they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. **17** But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** So that you may not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. **19** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves dig through and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not dig through nor steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. **22** The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light; **23** But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! **24** No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. **25** Because of this, I say to you, Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of heaven. They do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** Who among you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? **28** And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider well the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin *thread*. **29** But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. **30** And if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is *here* today and tomorrow is cast into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, you of little faith? **31** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? **32** For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its *own* evil.

Matt. 6:9-15 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; **10** Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. **14** For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; **15** But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.

- A. The principle of prayer is to pray in secret to be seen by our Father who sees in secret; we need to pray to the Lord, worship the Lord, contact the Lord, and fellowship with the Lord in a secret way—vv. 5-6:

Matt. 6:5-6 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. **6** But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

1. The thing that frustrates us the most from growing in life is the self, and the self enjoys doing things in public display for the glory of men—John 5:44; 12:43.

John 5:44 How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?

John 12:43 For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

2. If we live by the Father's hidden life, we may pray much, but others will not know how much we have prayed—Isa. 45:15.

Isa. 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.

- B. Matthew 6:9-13 is the Lord's instruction to us to "pray in this way" to "our Father who is in the heavens" (v. 9a); this pattern of prayer can be divided into three sections:

Matt. 6:9-13 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; **10** Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Matt. 6:9 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified;

1. The three basic prayers concerning God are related to the Divine Trinity; "Your name be sanctified" is related mainly to the Father; "Your kingdom come," to the Son; and "Your will be done," to the Spirit—vv. 9b-10a:

Matt. 6:9-10 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; **10** Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth.

- a. This is being fulfilled in this age, and it will be ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom age when the name of God will be

excellent in all the earth, the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ, and the will of God will be accomplished—Psa. 8:1; Rev. 11:15.

Psa. 8:1 O Jehovah our Lord, / How excellent is Your name / In all the earth, / You who have set Your glory over the heavens!

Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

- b. After the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, Christ came to bring the heavenly rule to earth so that the earth could be recovered for God's interest, so that the will of God could be done on earth as in heaven (Matt. 6:10b); the kingdom people must pray for this until the earth is fully recovered for God's will in the coming kingdom age.

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth.

2. The three requests concerning our need are protective prayers: "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"—vv. 11-13a:

Matt. 6:11-13 Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- a. Daily bread indicates a living that is by faith; we should live by faith, on the Father's daily supply.
b. The kingdom people should ask the Father to forgive their debts, their failures, their trespasses, as they forgive their debtors to maintain peace (by the arbitrating peace of Christ); we have to clear up any separating factors between us and God and between us and others—vv. 14-15; Col. 3:15.

Matt. 6:14-15 For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; **15** But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.

Col. 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

- c. Because we know our weakness, we should ask the Father not to bring us into temptation but to deliver us from the evil one, the devil, and from the evil that is out of him (by being filled with the Spirit)—John 17:15; Eph. 5:16-18; 6:13.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of *the hands of the evil one*.

Eph. 5:16-18 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph. 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

3. The prayer to the Father concludes with three reverent praises as extolling prayers: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"—the kingdom is of the Son, which is the realm in which God exercises His power, and the power is of the Spirit, which carries out God's intention so that the Father may have His corporate expression in glory—Matt. 6:13b:

Matt. 6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- a. Thus, the pattern of the Lord's prayer begins with the Divine Trinity and ends with the Divine Trinity.
b. It also begins with God the Father and ends with God the Father; God the Father is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.
C. Such a critical prayer increases our seeking of the kingdom of the heavens as the Father's heart's desire and affords us our need of the divine supply of grace to fulfill all the supreme and strict requirements of the kingdom of the heavens for God's good pleasure.