

The Private Prayer Language of Jesus Christ

In a day where there seems to be confusion about prayer, it is important to understand the model for prayer as commanded by Jesus Christ to the founding members of His body, the Apostles, who were filled and led by the Holy Spirit. Preceding the apostolic questioning of Christ about prayer, Jesus spoke in public to those who are called out by God, who will soon serve His body in a new profound way as an advance on the commonwealth of Israel in the world. (Matthew 6) They were commanded to pray in the manner that Jesus has commanded. Jesus Christ is the supreme commander of how to pray in the Spirit of God, and teaches all of His followers the language of private prayer. Is what Christ offers as instruction for prayer sufficient for communion with Him? A simple question to ask yourself when you pray..... "Do I pray as Christ has commanded me to pray or am I offering to Him more than he commands?"

Jesus, in His public ministry, taught "the people" the supreme meaning of the language of private prayer and to whom this prayer was to be petitioned. According to Christ, the initial and highest purpose of prayer is not to petition for personal edification and fulfillment; but in contrast, Jesus makes it clear to His followers that God is the object of authentic prayer. The language of private prayer is petitioning the will of God, His kingdom and His eternal glory.

The language of private prayer is also clear, so that when private prayer is offered to God it is offered with a sincere heart and without distraction. God knows our need for prayer and our need for Him before we pray. In times that we do not know how to pray, which is most of the time, the Holy Spirit is faithful to intercede on our behalf.

Romans 8:25-27 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (26) In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; (27) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Christ instructs us to recognize to whom we pray, and to what extent it will be received from a humble heart. God rewards those who know Him and seek Him.

Matthew 6:6-18 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (7) "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. (8) "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. (9) "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in

heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (10) 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. (11) 'Give us this day our daily bread. (12) 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (13) 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]' (14) "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (15) "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (16) "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are 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 your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

The primary thrust of Jesus' private prayer language was obedience to the Father and obedience to the Father's will. In the height of all human emotion that anyone can possibly imagine, Christ's agonizing realization of the weight of sin and His incarnate purpose is seen in His private prayer. Christ's chief act of selflessness was that the will of the Father be accomplished. It is hard to imagine any prayer that may be full to capacity with more sincere emotion than the private prayer of Jesus Christ to the Heavenly Father. His spirit was clear in its intent and purpose for the kingdom of God.

Matthew 26:36-44 *Then Jesus *came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and *said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." (37) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. (38) Then He *said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." (39) And He went a little beyond them, and 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." (40) And He *came to the disciples and *found them sleeping, and *said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? (41) "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (42) He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." (43) Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. (44) And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.*

The instruction that Christ gives to His followers concerning prayer is with authority and without any ambiguity. He commands His followers to pray privately in a language that glorifies the Father, without vanities and without emotional selfishness, as demonstrated by his own private prayer. The language that Jesus commands with authority is focused on the glory of the Father and in His glory for all of eternity.

Matthew 7:28-29 *When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; (29) for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.*

In every recorded instance of the private prayer language of Jesus Christ, he commands prayer to be directed to the Father and to the will of the Father for all eternity.

Luke 11:1-4 *It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (2) And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. (3) 'Give us each day our daily bread. (4) 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"*

Eph 6:18-20 *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, (19) and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, (20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

The content and persistence of prayer is vitally important as the boldness of the gospel is made know in the world. Praying in the Spirit, shown by Christ in all aspects of His prayer life, is the model and command for the life of any Christian. Praying in the Spirit brings glory to the Father and petitions His will for all eternity.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-25 *Rejoice always; (17) pray without ceasing; (18) in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (19) Do not quench the Spirit; (20) do not despise prophetic utterances. (21) But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; (22) abstain from every form of evil. (23) Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24) Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (25) Brethren, pray for us.*

Jesus Christ continues to present the most excellent definition for the language of private prayer. It is a language of unceasing honor, hallowing the God of glory. It is a prayer of thankfulness declaring God's justifying will among His people found in Christ Jesus; and His sustaining work by His Spirit delivering to His people sanctification as they eagerly await His return.

All Christians should learn to pray in harmony with the private prayer commands of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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Chris Johnson is currently the Pastor of Grace Church at Hermitage which is located eleven miles east of downtown Nashville. He is a full-time employ of Fresenius Medical Care, the world's largest dialysis provider, with headquarters in Bad Homburg Germany. Chris is the Manager of Information Systems specializing in Network Architecture and Engineering for over 2200 clinics serving 175,000 patients.