



Christ's School of Prayer-Part 2: Remember Who We are Talking To

Was flying back to Orange County, and I had a chatty pilot on the PA. Of course, I love the pilots, respect them of course, but he kept telling us how he wanted to get us back to Orange County early. I mean right from the beginning. We got in the air early. He was like, oh I'm going to try and get you back early. Trying to get you back early. Ok, that's awesome. Every time I'd take my headphones off - what's he saying this time? I'm going to get you back early. I think we're going to be early. Alright, that's good. I was going home so I was excited about that, and sure enough we landed about 15 - 20 minutes early into Orange County. We were all very happy about that. We landed, of course as we do in Orange County. You make that hard braking there at the end of the runway, make that left turn toward the terminal, and as we made that left turn toward the terminal the plane stopped. The sheepish pilot got on the PA. There are no gates available for us right now. We're going to have to wait. So we waited 15 - 20 minutes to find a gate that opened up.

And I thought to myself - before you think you're going to achieve your objectives and your goals there are certain essentials you need to have in place. And certainly in that case we needed a gate that was open so we could get out of that stinking plane.

Our objective, as we started this series last time we were together, is to be better at praying. We want an improved prayer life. We'd like to, as I put it, we'd like to pray well. We'd like to pray more broadly. We'd like to pray more deeply. We'd like to have the kind of prayer life that God intended us to have. That's our goal. That's our objective. But there is an essential that if it's not in place, if we don't have this, then our prayer life has no chance. Matter of fact, if the one thing that our text that we're studying this morning, is not happening in our prayer life, at worst we're not praying at all. You're just talking to yourself. At best I suppose, you've got a really bad prayer life. It's not working out. So we need this essential. It becomes, in this 2nd verse of Chapter 11 of Luke, the lynchpin, the benchmark, the foundation. It is the centerpiece of what makes a good prayer life a good prayer life.

I want you to look at this with us in Luke 11:2. We've started this series on prayer. We've reached the beginning of the model prayer that we're going to work through phrase by phrase, separated by verbs. All the verbal imperatives, at least in the original language, they come out clearly. We're going to look at each one of those, and say Ok, what are the kinds of things that Christ wants us to be praying for and this first one is very very important. It is the lynchpin, the backbone, the mainstay. It is what governs and influences all of our praying. So put your eyeballs on this text. Pull it up on your phone or your iPad, or turn in your old fashioned Bible to Luke Chapter 11.

I'll give you the context. We dealt with this last time. Verse 1. "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray,



as John taught his disciples’.” Verse 2, “And he, [Christ] said to them [his disciples], “When you pray, say:...”

Now before I even read the first phrase of this I should make clear that while this seems to set us for, Ok, here’s the words we’re supposed to say. That’s clearly not the intention of Christ. Follow me now. Some of you grew up in a church culture where that’s what you did. You recited prayers. You recited words. Now the only other time Jesus gave us this outline for prayer was at the Sermon on the Mount. He was up there in Galilee in the first part of his ministry on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, up and around the Northern part of Israel and we’ve had so much happen since then. We’ve made our trek through Samaria. We’re moving from Capernaum and all those cities that he worked in now into Judea in and around Jerusalem. We were in the last chapter in and around Bethany already. Now we have this question that comes up while he’s in Judea, and the disciples say, teach us to pray. So this is the second reference in my opinion. Some people may argue with me on that. I don’t think there is any question in my mind. Two distinct descriptions of the kind of praying we should do. And I say that because if you lay them side by side even the wording doesn’t match, and I’m telling you if this is the wording we’re supposed to recite I’m thinking I would see it identical. Not only that, I would see it in the rest of the Book of Acts. I would see John repeating it. I’d see Paul repeating it. I’d see James repeating it. Everybody saying this prayer, but that’s not what we have. Clearly this is not the intention of Christ. And the original audience understood this, and I’d like to say to you as he sets up in the Sermon on the Mount, we shouldn’t be into the “vain repetition.” And you can say well you can repeat without having a vain or useless repetition. Well I suppose that’s true, but we don’t see the pattern of Christ giving a set of words so that people can repeat those words. So while it may appear that way as we read it off the page. We’ll say this. We understand by the way this is laid out and how it is applied in the first century, these aren’t words simply to repeat.

So what’s the first phrase? “Father, hallowed be your name.” Now stop there. That’s all we’re going to cover today so it’s going to take us 250 years to get through the Gospel of Luke at this pace. We’ll take the next 3 words next time and you know we’re slowing down because this is critically important to take component by component by component.

First component, “Father hallowed be your name.” Now I’m assuming outside of this context you have not used the word hallowed lately. So how was your dinner at the new restaurant? Hallowed. You didn’t say that. Kids about to go swimming. Hey, I’ve got some advice for you, be hallowed out there. We don’t even understand what it means. We know it’s a part of some prayer that Jesus said. Hallowed by your name, but what does this mean? Now, this is important for your to jot down. The word hallowed is simply the verbal form of the word holy. That’s all it is. The word holy turned into a verb now is a doing word. It says, now, hallowed be your name.

Now another grammatical thing. I hate to bring up grammar so early on a Sunday, but you need to know this is a third person imperative. That means it’s something we’re asking God to do, but it’s in the third person which means we’re not asking God to make his own name more hallowed or holy. We’re saying, let it be more holy in the third person, among people. Let people, let things, let circumstances, let even in my own mind in my own praying let me understand you,



because that's what the name is - name represents who God is - let it be more hallowed or holy. Now holy, if you been around the block in the Christian life, you know the non-technical use of that word is simply to be set apart. To be distinct. To be different. That's what holy means. That's why holy can be used of things. Inanimate objects can be called holy if they're set apart for a particular use. When you are at dinner and you use a spoon and you set it next to your plate, trust me, that's holy - that's yours. I don't want to use it. I'm not even a germ-o-phobe, and I'd prefer not to use your spoon if you've already licked on it. So, that's your spoon. Set apart. In the temple and in the tabernacle there were utensils there that you used for things like the show bread that was put out on the table as a sign of God's provision. That was special bread and the tools were special tools, and you couldn't bring that home and stir your cauldron of stew that you're fixing for your family. That was a holy utensil. Used for a holy purpose, a set apart purpose, in the tabernacle or the temple.

So we know something can be set apart for a particular purpose. Well the word holy then starts to take on some moral or ethical qualities when we think about the fact that God is other one the different one, the set apart one. Because when I look at who God is and I start thinking well God is truth, but he's real truth. He's always true, and he doesn't lie. And then I look at my life and I say, well you know, I've got a problem. I don't always tell the truth, and I don't always say the right thing. I sometimes misrepresent, and there's a problem of hypocrisy. Well I need to be more like him. So I'm going to be increasing like the set apart one, the distinct one, the unique one. And then you'd look at my life and you'd say well he's becoming more holy, more set apart because he's more like the one who's holy and other. That's the picture of the word. And of course when we say, Father hallowed - holy - be your name. Name representing all that you are. Well what we're saying here in our minds - we need to in our thinking and we want to in our experience realize that the person we're speaking to is different. Totally set apart. Is uncommon.

1. Remember God Is Uncommon

If you're taking notes this morning, let's put that down as Number 1. When we pray we need to remember God is uncommon. We need to remember just how uncommon he is. Remember he's not like us. Now here's the thing. Prayer as a definition can be simple. We're communicating creatures so if prayer is just communicating to God that seems pretty common, pretty normal. Well I suppose prayer in its essence is pretty normal and common, but the one you're speaking to is so uncommon it changes the whole thing. It becomes a whole unique and difficult thing to do. As John Bunyan, and some of you were in class, you know John Bunyan wrote one of the most popular books in all of English literature. Matter of fact, it was the number 2 best seller for so many years in our country, Pilgrim's Progress. I mean after the Bible it was the second most consumed book in our American heritage. Pilgrim's Progress written by John Bunyan. He said this about prayer. He said, real prayer, and that's a good qualifier. Real prayer is a very serious concern. For after all we are speaking to the God of all of the universe. Now just to slow that down and to think about it, you're right. This is not unique in that I'm communicating, cause I communicate with people all the time. What makes it unique is, I'm communicating to someone so different, so other, so completely unique and uncommon, that it becomes a whole different kind of experience.



If I said, hey I've got a friend here on the phone. Talk to my friend. It's my cousin. Talk to my cousin. So you pick up the phone and say, hey, how you doing? Where you from? Where you live? Are you in town? Are you coming to town? Ok, it's easy. Then I could even have you talk about someone maybe that you revere. Someone you hold of high esteem in your mind. Maybe you're a sports fan. Let's say you're a baseball fan - an Angels fan. Let's say you're a big Mike Trout fan. Big Mike Trout fan. You think, ahhh, he's the greatest player. So great. Love it. Love the Angels. And I say, hey, I've got my cousin on the phone. She's moving to Orange County. She wants to be an Angels fan. Why don't you talk to her about the great Mike Trout and tell her all about how great of a baseball player. Oh, yeah, and you could sit there and talk about what a great player and your reverence for that great player. It would be easy for you to do. If then I pulled out my phone and said well wait a minute. Thanks for sharing with my cousin how great Mike Trout is. Make one more call...hey, I have Mike Trout on the phone. Why don't you speak to Mike Trout for a little while? I guarantee you that would be a different kind of conversation for you. I don't know who you esteem the highest, but picture whoever it is. You think some political figure, some artist, some musician, some basketball player, whatever. If I said here they are on the phone, this person that you talk about, you revere, you admire, you celebrate. A celebrity in your mind, here now speak to that person. Noooo, it would be different. You'd feel weird. It would be hard.

That's exactly what's going on in Isaiah. and I'd like you to turn there. Isaiah 6. We have Isaiah speaking for 5 chapters about the great and exalted God. And he's speaking to the people of Israel and saying we've got to get back to understanding how great God is, and in light of that great God our behavior is not good. And he's preaching all kinds of things that are completely accurate and 100% needed, and then in Chapter 6 God hands him the phone and says, now let's talk to each other here. Talk to me. And the vision of God in Isaiah Chapter 6 changes everything about the way Isaiah thinks about the God that he's been preaching about. We don't have the advantage of God slamming some vision into our mind every time we pray, but we need to imagine the reality of the God that we're speaking to.

Title of this message, subtitle. You've got it right? Remember who you're talking to. Remember to whom you speak when you're speaking to the God of the universe. As Bunyan said, it is a serious concern for us to pray. It's not easy. Something that takes this thought of being very uncommon. Now look at the text with me. Verse 1. "In the year that King Uzziah died." Who? What is that mean? And you read right over that. Uzziah, Old Testament guy. Who is that? He reigned for 52 years in Israel. Now think about this. You don't have to be that great of a leader if you provide leadership stability in one regime or one administration for 52 years. You're probably going to have a lot of good things happen, and they did. This was a very stable leadership, and they prospered and they became very prosperous. And unfortunately with a lot of prosperity often comes complacency, particularly complacency about God and their quest for righteousness, and sure enough there were a lot of bad things going on. All you have to do is read the first 5 chapters of Isaiah, and say, it's gotten really bad in Israel.

He says, in that year that he died. Now this is administration change. This is a changing of the guard so to speak. Now opportunity - God's going to send him into the second phase of his ministry, and he says, "...I saw the LORD sitting on a throne..." Now underline these words

here. “high and lifted up...” Now anytime you have a throne they usually put them on a pedestal or you’ve got to walk up a bunch of stairs like Solomon’s throne. There’s several stairs to get there so you’ve got something that physically high, but there’s much more to that. The idea of that spatial distance has the idea of how the greatness, the transcendence, the majesty. He sees God that way and just to make sure we understand it, he gives us an almost comical description in the next line, “...and the train of his robe filled the temple.” Now you’ve read that before. You’ve probably even sung songs with these lyrics in it, but that is ridiculous, is it not? You’ve been to a wedding, have you not, when the gal, I don’t know she thinks she’s really all that so she’s got this super long train behind her dress. And it isn’t just a foot. It’s not 2 feet. It’s not 5 feet. It’s like really, you know, come on... 35 foot train. That’d be like, what are you doing? Now that’s one thing. What if her train was so long there were no seats available because in the room it was all over the room. You’d be like, woman what in the world are you trying to prove? Well, it’s my day... woman, stop it. We know it’s your day. We see you’re regalia. I get it. Here is the train of the robe of the King which obviously was an expression, a depiction and a symbol of his greatness. And that train, that robe, that regalia filled the entire room. Now this is a vision so I mean this is how he viewed it, but we get the point. He is so different. He is so exalted. He is so above and so uncommon that even in his greatness he’s not like a normal King. He’s not even like the super-duper King. He’s like the super-duper King of Kings and his expressions of his greatness fill the entire room that he’s in.

And above him stood these weird creatures, the seraphim. Seraphim the root of that Hebrew word seraph means the burning ones. Like those glowing creatures. Each had 6 wings, with 2 each of these covered their face, with 2 they covered their feet, with 2 they flew around and they called out to one another cool, hip and awesome is the LORD of Hosts. Nooo. Omniscient, Omnipresent and eternal is the... no.... I know, I know, New Testament.... Love, love, love is the LORD of Hosts. No! When the angels are going to express the greatness of God they use a word that describes that everything about God - his love, his eternity, his power, his sovereignty, his authority are so unique. Go back to Sesame Street. You can look at all of those things, but there’s one that does not belong. Right? Remember that old thing? Which one does not belong? This one does not belong. This creature is so different. He’s not even a creature. He’s in a category by himself. He’s the creator. There’s only 2 categories - creator and creature, and he’s in a category all by himself. Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts. Of Armies. Everyone sits there to serve him. He’s completely unique.

Now you rush into prayer and start chatting with God about the things you need, the things you want - please help me with that. Don’t let this happen to me. Stop. Stop. Stop. The first thing on Jesus’ list is you need to remember who you’re talking to. “Father, hallowed be your name.” Everything about you needs to be understood in everyone’s mind as completely other and totally different. I know Kierkegaard and Otto and Karl Barthe misused the phrase “wholly other” and I sometimes use it because there’s certainly a truth to that. There is something that is so unique. Now I know we’re made in his image and there’s connectivity. We can communicate and we can express truth about God. I’m not that kind of theologian, but I understand the “wholly other” concept of the theologians who said there is something so different he doesn’t even fit into a category that we can express. Oh, we can and Revelation expresses him, but we’ve got to start there because I don’t think our error in today’s theology or in the pew of the average church is



that they're thinking to highly of God.

The problem is we're thinking to lowly about God. So we better work on our view of exalting our view of God. So much so that we put it in the founding documents of this church 10 years ago. We want to always not only have a reliance on prayer, but we said always maintain a high view of God cause he's holy, he's different, he's other.

And when he spoke, look at verse 4, "the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said; Woe is me!" Not it's really cool for me to be here and see this awesome God that I'm getting to watch - no - woe to me. Cause that's the other thing. I talk about everything kind of falling into place if we get our view of God right, when we address him in prayer. No one will have to say, oh yeah that's right, I need to confess my sin if I'm praying. You don't need a list to remember that. When you start with the greatness and the holiness and the transcendence of this completely different, uncommon person that you're speaking to, you will immediately like Peter in the boat, like Isaiah in the vision, like the people at the mount of the giving of the law there, they're going to say, I'm sinful. I'm sinful I can't even have a conversation. He's too perfect and I'm too sinful. "...Woe to me! For I am lost; for I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live among the people of unclean lips;" Cause my eyes, here's why he sees that and feels that like he didn't in the first 5 chapters - "my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts!"

Now catch this verse 6. "One of the seraphim now flew [over to him and he had in] his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar." So here's this burning ember while you've got burning beings around this God as they're all crying out unique, holy, distinct, different, uncommon is the this One and now here comes this person and says, I'm sinful. How can I even have a conversation here. And that burning coal touches his lips cause that's the point of his conviction. He sees his sin. I'm ruined. I'm lost. I've sinned with my mouth and that coal touches his mouth. Verse 7. And the angel says "Behold this has touched your lips; and your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for. And I heard a voice of the Lord saying; 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said," Now note this carefully. Well what's the job? I don't know, what's it pay? I mean it's not Africa or anything like that? I'm not going to have to go to some, you know, far away country in India or anything am I? I am... I'll be near restaurants? Long as I have pretty good pay. No. "Here I am. Send me." Talk about the blank check. You want to talk about praying according to the will of God. You better start with a high view of God. Everything hangs together. Everything is determined in your praying by that.

If God is exalted in your mind, you start to recognize that some requests fit and others don't. And sometimes you realize what kind of request would that ever be if I think of who I'm speaking to? If I think about that person accurately. Signs the blank checks, says God I don't care what it is you want me to do, I'll do it cause you are high and exalted. The authority in your life is unlike any other. In light of you I see my sins so clearly and when he steps up and says I've got something to have done in this generation, in this world, in this place in which you live. The person that prays rightly responds very quickly and clearly. Whatever man, here am I. Send me.



Now I don't have time to go to the passages I was dumb enough to put down on my outline here because I thought I would have time for, so jot it down as homework, OK? Please do this. Write this down. I mean you came to church to study the Bible, right? Write this down and put this down as a homework assignment. Malachi Chapter 1:6-11. You need this passage and I wish I had time to walk through phrase by phrase, but let me give you the jest of it. You want to know if your view of God is where it needs to be in your prayer life? Just look at how you approach that God in prayer. Look at how you are attentive or inattentive in that praying. Look at how you are alert or asleep in that praying. Look at how your mind drifts or your mind settles clearly on that God. All you have to do is recognize that in correspondence to your view of God will become your effort, your energy, your focus, your persistence in praying based on how you view that God. He compares it to how the people in that day, this post-exilic period in Judea how they viewed their governor. The governor came over and they had audience with the governor. They were going to be focused. They were going to talk. They were going to be clear. He talks about the gifts that they would bring their governor and says compare it to the gifts that you're bringing me. Let's think in terms of the gift of time and attention in our discussion. I mean if you're going to bring more time and attention and focus to a conversation with a governor than you are with the living God then you need to remember John Bunyan's words. Prayer is a serious matter. I mean, after all, we are talking to the God of the universe. Malachi Chapter 1, great homework assignment.

Here's one more we don't have time for. Hebrews 12:21-29. Because I know some of you are going to lean back and cross your arms. You're going to lean back and go this pastor is so stuck in the Old Testament. He's got that God of the Old Testament on his mind. I wish he'd get into the New Testament where God lightens up and everything gets much more copasetic. Get into the left side of your Bible. No, the right side of your Bible cause in the right side of your Bible you'll find a nice kind gentler God there. I'm glad you brought that up.

In Hebrews Chapter 12 there's an argument about the greatness of God and the fear that you should possess in approaching him. Fear? We're not supposed to fear. This pastor really doesn't know his Bible. Hasn't he read 1 John, "perfect love casts out all fear" and God's all about love. No fear in relating to God. Listen. That's why I put two books on the back for you. One is by our good friend Bunyan and the other one I think by Frank Arnold or Arnold Frank. I don't know. He's got 2 first names. I can never remember which comes first. He writes on the fear of God and any good book on the fear of God and that's all I had room for is two books on that topic, you're going to see there are two distinct ways that the word fear is used in the Bible both Old and New Testament. One has to relate to being an enemy of God and being punished by God, and of course the love of Christ through the atoning work of the Cross has cast out any fear of condemnation. I am not going to be cast into outer darkness and condemned by the God of the universe because of the loving work of Christ.

There is another kind of fear here that is continually called for for every Christian that no longer has fear of punishment, and that's the fear that Peter spoke of. You do understand that the one you address as Father is also an impartial judge, and you will answer to him. 2 Corinthians 5, 1 Peter 1. It's all over the Bible. We have the call in our own scriptures to tell us that when you address God, remember he's the great authority that one day will put your life on an evaluation, and you will answer for every word you've spoken. For condemnation? No, but I can guaranty



you it'll be an uncomfortable time, and it ought to change our behavior. And by the way in 1 Peter Chapter 1, it's tucked within this call, "be Holy" God says, as "I am Holy", quoting Leviticus chapter 11. Peter says don't forget that. Nothings changed there.

Now in Hebrews 12, that's the homework assignment you'll see this. That if the God of the Old Testament was to be feared you ought to fear the New Testament God even more. Now of course it's the same God, but in the Isaiah vision if you see yourself as unworthy to speak to the God of the universe that's so uncommon, there's some embers burning on the alter that was used for animal sacrifice. And those embers were going to come in this vision touch your lips and atone for your sin. Now that was a picture and a symbol of animals dying as a picture of death representing your provision for life. Takes place every time we eat. In other words eating in the middle of the worship of the Old Testament with some burnt offerings, well you didn't eat those, but many of them eat. And the point was we're going to take that common experience of something dying - even you vegetarians are killing all kinds of plants to have your salads, you understand. You're killing something to have life and now that was all memorialized and venerated in some sense in a ritual to show that for you to live, got to be death if you're going to live before a holy God. Something innocent has to die. And in that case it was animals. But if you feared that God because you saw that symbol, you got the idea that God is an awesome God.

But in the New Testament he sends his own son and the God man Jesus Christ dies and spills his blood and the text of Hebrews is so crystal clear. If you feared that God of the Old Testament because of what an awesome consuming fire he was, well welcome to the God of the New Testament cause now you see just how holy he is and just how sinful we are, and at what cost is really took to have our sins atoned for. You need to recognize that if you're going to fear the God of the Old Testament, you should fear the God of the New Testament even more. It's an argument in Hebrews 12 from lesser to greater. Look it up. Check it out. I'm not putting words in the Bible's mouth. Verses 21 - 29, Hebrews Chapter 12. There's no getting around it. It is the concern of every New Testament Christian because we have crystal clarity about the problem of sin and the greatness of God's holiness to say, wow, we're dealing with a very uncommon God.

Well Pastor Mike you're not helping me at all want to pray. Common on man. I mean it makes me not want to pray. Now I want to be like those people at Mt Sinai that sit there and say, oh Moses you go talk to God cause we don't want to talk to him. No, that's not my intention, and to help you with that I want to go back to the first word that Jesus gave us in this text. Take a look at it. Verse, middle of verse 2, "When you pray," it's printed on your worksheet, "say:" what's the first word? "Father," Father! Well you want the opposite of hallowed it would be the word father. Here's what the theologians call "the dialectic." Trying to figure out these words intention. You want me to remember that he is hallowed, and his name is hallowed, and that he's different and other and uncommon, and now you're saying you ought to address him as though he's as common as your own father. That you're his child. Here's the truths that need to sit side by side in our minds when you come to God in prayer. I don't want you to be like the Israelites at the base of Mt Sinai, going, oh, we don't want to hear it! We don't want to talk to God! You talk to God! We don't want to talk to God. I don't want you to be like Peter and say, wow, you see the deity of Christ, I want to run from that, away from me Lord. I'm a sinful man.



That's not what God wants. He wants you to approach him as Father. Those are the words intention. Intentionally set before us in the model prayer of Christ to remind us of something that really makes the gospel great and we need to recognize that. It makes it great because here's the thing. The word Father is not generally used for God in the Old Testament. Fifteen times in the 39 books of the Old Testament we see God and Father used as a combination in terms of describing God, the God of the universe as Father, and zero times in prayer. Never in prayer.

New Testament we have a heightened view of the uncommon nature of God, and how great his holiness is. What it really cost to atone for our sin and we revere him even more, and now we start seeing words like this, hey when you pray, call him Father. You know that this reference to God shows up in the first four books of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the gospels 165 times. We've just made the distance between sinful men and a holy God the bridge builder. The web of words built is a constant repeating of the word Father. What does that create in us? Let me just describe it this way, Number 2, when we pray, we need to ...

2. Pray With a Grateful Humility

A grateful humility. It needs to be such a humble thing that a transcendent God would ever deal with you and me, rotten sinners, before him. And yet I'm not just his acquaintance. I'm not just his friend. I'm actually his child and he is my dad. I mean this is a hard set of things to keep together in our minds. The juxtaposition of the word grateful and humble. I just want to spend a couple of minutes in this section. It's all I can do is illustrate it for you in a book that we just read in our Daily Bible Reading. Hopefully, you're keeping up with us, and we just finished the book of 1 Chronicles. Now sometimes you speed through that because there's a lot of names, but I want you to go back to 1 Chronicles Chapter 17, and I want to look at two sections in 1 Chronicles. One that we read last week and one that we read just yesterday, and I want to look at David praying. David is going to pray in two occasions here that I think will give us a perfect example of what it means to address God as a transcendent completely other God and yet as Dad. And that means that I am so incredibly grateful that he would stoop to bless me. To be good to me. To embrace me. To accept me. To forgive me. To atone for my sin.

Take a look at these two passages with me. Let's start in 1 Chronicles 17:16. And "King David went in and sat before the Lord and said..." So we've set up a prayer here. King David, he's the king. Is there a more important person in Israel? No. He's the king at the top of the org chart. King David went in and sat before the Lord, Yahweh and said, "Who am I O LORD God, and what is my house [my lineage, my family], that you have brought me thus far?" He begins, why, it doesn't even make sense. Look at the humility here, that you would even bring me - some shepherd, some sinner, some adulterer, some murderer - and you would exalt me to the place of being the King. I can't believe I've gotten this far. And why is he talking about his lineage or his house? Well because, verse 17. He makes clear that God had just made a promise if you glance back up. He created the, what's called the Davidic covenant. The covenant for David's lineage that would ultimately be fulfilled as Matthew and Luke clearly make the connection that Jesus Christ is the ultimate son of David who would fulfill the promises of the Davidic covenant that's spelled out here in the text. And he says, God it's no small thing for you. You can do it. I know you can. You're great. It's a small thing rather in your eyes. It's easy for you to do, "O God. [for] You have spoken of your servant's house [his lineage] for a great while to come..."



Way down in the future “and [you] have shown me future generations, O LORD God!” You promised these great things. “And what more can David say to you for honoring your servant?” Now there’s a word you wouldn’t connect with the King. You wouldn’t walk in and call him a servant. And he calls himself a servant cause he recognizes against the greatest of God his comparative sense of worth here is, I can’t even believe you would be good to me for, look at the bottom of verse 18. “For you know your servant.” And we know a little bit too because God was careful to pull back the curtain and have you look at the sin and all the warts of David. David knows himself, and God knows him even better. And he says, it’s amazing. “what more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant. And for your servant’s sake, O LORD and according to your own heart, you have done all this greatness, in making known all these things. There is none like you, O LORD, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.” You have revealed yourself. It’s read in the temple, or in this case in the tabernacle at this point in history. “And who is like your people...” Look at how grateful they are? How humble they are that here is a nation, one nation on the earth whom God sent to redeem to be his people, and if anyone knows it’s not because of their own righteousness, it’s David. Making for yourself a name for great and awesome things. You’re going to do great things. You’re gracious. You’re kind. You drove out other nations before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt. There’s the two seasons of Joshua going back to Moses, the conquest and the exodus. Verse 22, “And you made your people Israel to be your people for ever...” You made promises to them, “and you O LORD became their God. And now, [verse 23] O LORD let the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house be established forever, do as you as you’ve spoken.”

When you rush into your prayer list with the God of the universe and you start chattering about all the things you want God to do. Do you see a difference here when you start recognizing the greatness of God as David did? When you start recognizing how gracious he is to even include you in his family, and you have that grateful humility before God. Now all of a sudden you’re trying to align yourself with what God wants done in your life. You want to talk about everything hanging on your view of God as you pray. It starts there. It adjusts the way he prays. It adjusts the things he prays about. He just wants God to carry out his will in his life, “and your name will be established and magnified [verse 24 says] forever saying, ‘The LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, is Israel’s God,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. [A lineage for him. A monarchical lineage.] Therefore your servant has found courage to pray before you.” You want to talk about humbleness. You know just because of your goodness and your stated revelation as to what you are going to do in my, it just emboldens me to even have the courage to pray. Amazing. “And now O LORD you are God, you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever before you for it is you, O LORD, who have blessed, and it is blessed forever.”

We’ve got to pray with that grateful humility. David does it here as he thinks about the promise God made about his future. One more, I told you two. The one we read yesterday in 1 Chronicles Chapter 29. Turn to the end of the book real quick. David as you remember was barred from creating or building, or overseeing and administrating the building of the temple, because he was the warrior and the sword in God’s hands. And he said I don’t want a man of



blood to build my worship center so I'm going to have your son do it, but David of course, was going to put together all the resources that he could. Solomon would build it which we read this morning in 2 Chronicles, but David puts together all these things. He calls for an offering and people start giving generously. They put this big treasury together to build the temple, and he stands back and he prays in a public meeting in front of the people and the regents and the magistrates of the kingdom.

And here is what he says. Verse 10. 1 Chronicles 29:10. "Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said 'Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. You are great. You are to be honored. You are to be praised. Yours O LORD is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, [Yours is the sovereignty. Yours is the oversight.] O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor [they all] come from you, and you rule over all. And all in your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all'." We wouldn't have anything if you didn't give it to us. Verse 13. "And now we thank you, our God, and we praise your glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to thus offer willingly?" Every time you see the right perspective of God in prayer you have that sense of awe that God would even give us anything. That adjusts everything about our praying. Who am I? "For all things come from you, and from your own [From your own] we have given [back to] you." Verse 15. For we're strangers before you and sojourners as all of our fathers were. Our days on earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding." We're not going to hang out on this planet very long. "O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for the building of a house for your holy name [it all] comes from your hand and it is all your own."

The kind of humility that we need in prayer. That is going to align and calibrate everything we ask for, everything that we say to God begins by having that very transcendent view of him that will leave us with, and look for these things, a strange dialectic tension-filled, if you will, distinction between being so grateful that we are the adopted children of God. That we have intimacy with God. That we can speak to God and have him near us and yet humble. We recognize the transcendence and greatness of God. Remember how uncommon God is, "hallowed by your name." Remember that we are his children by faith in Christ and so there should be a great sense of gratitude when we can call him father. Those are the two components of this little phrase, "Father, hallowed by your name." But there is one more little thing I need to bring up and end with because none of this works without Christ.

See in the temple image the burning embers on the alter were the pictures symbolically of the things that brought atonement for sin, but we know those were just symbols. We know that those were just images and ceremonies of the thing that really makes us right with God. The thing that allows us access to God. We know that it wasn't the blood of bulls and of goats and lamb and sheep. That didn't do anything. It was symbolic of the thing that we needed - perfect human righteousness. Righteous payment and punishment. The God who is transcendent should cast us away. So we need to be cast away, somehow, and the only way to do that is "in Christ." We need to somehow have righteousness that really makes us worthy to stand before God and address him as Father and the only way to get that human righteousness is "in Christ." Jot this down, number 3, when you pray, this always has to be a part of our praying. We need to pray... .

3. Pray With Confidence in Christ

Which is more than a phrase at the end of your praying, I hope. I know some people, they always tack that on their praying and they think, well I've done what the Bible says. It says I'm supposed to pray in Christ's name so at the end of my prayer, I say in Jesus' name, Amen. Which for most people is get ready to open your eyes. I'm almost done. We're about ready to eat. In Jesus' name and then I'm going to throw out that archaic Greek word, Amen. Words are nothing unless your brain is engaged in it and your brain needs to be engaged in praying in Jesus's name from the very beginning of your praying. Cause you cannot address a transcendent holy God unless there's some kind of ability that you have to stand there in someone else's righteousness. You're not acceptable to God. You should be cast out. You should say what the people at Sinai said. We don't want to hear him. Don't let him talk to us. We're going to be consumed. Why? Because as Hebrews 12 says, he is a consuming fire. Well how are you going to warm up, pardon the pun, to dad the consuming fire? Well knowing you have that privilege to be calling him Father, that should lead us to grateful humility, but you know how it works. It works because of Christ.

Two quick passages to end with. Hebrews Chapter 10: 19-22. Now the title of the book is what? Hebrews. Hebrews is written to? Hebrews. If you're a Hebrew, you're an Israelite the center of your society is a building called the temple. There's courts around it and fences around and all kinds of barriers and then you get to the building you have a place called the Holy Place and inside the Holy Place is another Holy Place. It's called the Holy of Holies, and you better not even think of going in there. Matter of fact no one would go in there except the high priest once year and after a long ceremony of things that you know make him religiously and ceremoniously ready to go in. Matter of fact if you're a bunch of teenagers and you want to hop a few fences and you want to do something you know crazy and you want to sneak into the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies well your knees ought to be knocking cause no one thinks about doing that. It's craziness.

Look at this verse. Verse 19. "Therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places... "What in the world are you talking about? You're going to go into the center that represents the dwelling place of God on earth. You're going to walk into that? No way. No, we do, much like the high priest did, not after spilling the blood of goats and bulls and oxen, but the blood of Christ. We have confidence because of the blood of Christ by a new and living way that he the opened for us through the curtain. Now you know the thing that separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies was a gigantic thick curtain. Josephus talks about 4 inches thick. Couple of Good Fridays ago you might remember the curtain that rose and our team constructed for us as I preached about that being torn on what day? Good Friday. Christ dies on a cross and says "it's finished" and then miraculously God does a miracle by going to the temple and taking that curtain, and if you think about a 4 inch thick curtain, no easy task, right? This is a God thing, tearing it from top to bottom. Why? Because now the place where God dwells there's access to, that's the picture of the little double entendre here that really refers to what? The curtain is supposed to get into our minds, but there's something much more important that had to tear to give us access and it's related to the blood of Christ. It's the body of Christ. And he says



that is through his flesh. Christ had to die on that cross and what that did was tear open access to the living God. Verse 21. “and since we have a great high priest” you’re not walking into the presence of God alone. That’s why you’re praying in Jesus’ name. What does that mean? In his authority, in his righteousness, with his representation, with his mediatorial work. We ride in on the coat-tails so to speak of the great high priest, Jesus Christ. And he is the great high priest over the whole team, over the whole house of God. “let us draw near with [knocking knees. No. with a sincere heart] a true heart in full assurance.” What are we banking on here? Christ and that means faith. We’ve got to have faith and trust him. Full assurance of faith.

With our hearts, make sure you’re a Christian now. Don’t try to pray without being a Christian. Only prayer that works without being a Christian is repentance and faith in Christ, but we though can now enter his presence and talk to him. Making sure that “our hearts [have been] sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” And remember there’s no baptism in the 21st Century or the 1st Century that is with pure water. There’s none. This is a picture of the New Covenant in Ezekiel that spoke of our need of cleansing through water and blood, and in that case, it wasn’t the blood of animals. It was looking forward to the blood of Christ. And the cleansing that we have - make sure you’re saved, and if you are, then you can have a sincere heart or “a true heart in full assurance of faith.” And you can walk right into the presence of God and call him dad. He’s our Father even though you never forget he’s a consuming fire.

Hebrews Chapter 4. And I want to take you there because there are days that you’ll pray with confidence, cause you’ll look back at the last week and you’ll say I had a good week. Man, my Christian life... happening. That, I want to make sure you don’t bank on that. Cause the next week you’ll have a bad day, and you’ll have a bad moment and a bad hour, and an unguarded moment, and you’ll say something, you’ll do something, and then you’ll be covered with shame and guilt, and you’ll feel bad. And if you keep the view of God as you should as an uncommon holy, transcendent God you will have the experience of I don’t want to pray now. Judicially, I suppose, and forensically as a Christian, you might look back to Hebrews 10 and say, I know I have access to God because I’m riding in on the coat-tails of Christ, but remember every time, every day, every hour no matter what the circumstances you have that access through Christ, and it’s not as though he’s waiting for you to have a good week in your Christian life before you can come in boldly with assurance to talk to him. Verse 14. Hebrews 4:14. “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens...” Now it’s not a picture of the temple. It’s a picture of the real temple where God lives in heaven. He’s gone there. We’re riding in on the coat-tails of Jesus, the son of God, then let us hold fast to our confession. Don’t waiver. We believe that we are saved because of the work of Christ, verse 15. “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.” He’s not looking over his shoulder as you ride in on the coattails of the regalia of the high priest, going what are you doing here? Look at what you just did yesterday. No. He can sympathize with our weakness. Matter of fact in every respect he’s been tempted as we are, yet he’s without sin obviously. In light of that knowing that we have a God who can sympathize with us and a mediator who can sympathize with us. I say God because of Psalm 103 that says like “a father shows compassion to his children so God has compassion on those who fear him.” You have a transcendent view of God. You fail. You fear him. You recognize his greatness. He pities us. He has compassion on us. Let us then, verse 16, this is the verse to highlight. Let us then with confidence drawn near to the throne of grace,



that we may receive mercy [who needs mercy? Sinners.] and find grace to help in time of need.” There’ll be times this week you’ll feel like I can’t pray right now. I can’t pray right now. Look at what I’ve done. Look at what I feel. I don’t feel worthy. Great. Now’s the time to make sure your trust is in the right place. We address God through Christ. It’s not a bunch of words we tack on the end of the prayer. You pray in Jesus’ name because of John 14:2. “No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jesus said. And if you’re with him you can walk right in and have a conversation with God. Flippantly? No. Disrespectfully? No. He’s the transcendent consuming fire, but the strange juxtaposition of his greatness and his holiness and our call to see him as dad those need to work together in our minds. And when those are both there, man, it adjusts everything about our prayer life.

Let me pray for us briefly. God we want nothing more than to be filled with Christ to be clothed with Christ. To have Christ before us and behind us and above us and beneath us and be draped in the righteous deeds of Christ. So thank you God for that. May it change the way we pray this week. To know that we come asking in confidence. Communicating our gratitude in confidence. Worshiping you with a great assurance and confidence that Christ has provided what we need to be acceptable in your sight. In Jesus’ name. Amen