



# PRAYER PT. II

**Matthew 5:9-10** *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

In the ancient world prayer was seen much as it is today, a way to get God to notice us and our needs. They would add many words to prayers so that whatever god they prayed to would have to listen and come to help; unfortunately, that is how many Christians view prayer as well. Prayer is central to a believer’s life. So Jesus gives further warnings and a positive example.

Every religious group harbors some who pray repetitiously (even the Jews in Jesus’ day did it). He labeled all such praying, even that of his own people, as pagan! But “Pagans” are not so much the target as the negative example of all who pray repetitiously.

When Jesus uses the words ‘empty phrases’ in Matthew 5:7 it is where we get the word babble from. The verb *battalogeō* (“keep on babbling”) is very rare, apart from writings dependent on the New Testament. It most likely derives from the Aramaic *baṭṭal* (“idle,” “useless”) which would mean “useless words.”

Prayer is a good thing, Jesus is not condemning prayer any more than he is condemning generosity from verse 2 or fasting from verse 16. He is not forbidding all long prayers or all repetition as Jesus did both:

- He prayed at length (Luke 6:12)
- He repeated himself in prayer (Matt 26:44)
- He told a parable to show his disciples that “they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1).

Jesus’ point is that His disciples should avoid meaningless, repetitive prayers offered under the misconception that mere length will make prayers efficacious. Such thoughtless “babble” can occur in liturgical and extemporaneous prayers alike. Essentially it is thoroughly pagan, for pagan gods thrive on incantation and repetition.

*Ancient Egyptian prayer to Amun-ra:*

*HAIL to thee, Amun-Ra, Lord of the thrones of the earth, the oldest existence, ancient of heaven, support of all things; Chief of the gods, lord of truth; father of the gods, maker of men and beasts and herbs; maker of all things above and below; Deliverer of the sufferer and oppressed, judging the poor; Lord of wisdom, lord of mercy; most loving, opener of every eye, source*

*of joy, in whose goodness the gods rejoice, thou whose name is hidden. Thou art the one, maker of all that is, the one; the only one; maker of gods and men; giving food to all. Hail to thee, thou one with many heads; sleepless when all others sleep, adoration to thee. Hail to thee from all creatures from every land, from the height of heaven, from the depth of the sea. The spirits thou hast made extol thee, saying, welcome to thee, father of the fathers of the gods; we worship thy spirit which is in us.*

When addressing Amun-ra how do you know when you have said enough names?

The personal Father God, to whom believers pray, does not require empty words piled on top of each other. Into all of this pagan mess Jesus says **Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name”** Jesus says remember that the real God’s posture toward you is one of favor, blessing and generosity. Our God wants to give us what we truly need...when you come to the real God simply say **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”** This prayer of Jesus is a ground breaking moment in the evolution of prayer.

Our God is not shaped by us, we are shaped by Him and His goodness. Our prayers must reflect all of who God has revealed Himself to be within the Sermon on the Mount.



## BAPTISMS & LABOR DAY BBQ

NEXT SUNDAY: 1pm

BBQ after:

A-L bring desserts

M-Z bring salad or side

Chicken, beans, salsa, drinks and bread will be provided.

Everyone welcome to swim, play games and enjoy the sun - please plan accordingly

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