

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Jesus told the people to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt 6:11). I praise you today as the God who provides. You know my needs before I ask, and you will meet my needs if I will put your kingdom first. You have given me spiritual riches in Jesus Christ, and you have given me earthly blessings as well. All glory and honor to you, the giver of good gifts and the Father of lights! Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the rest of Jesus’ sermon on the mount. First, Jesus told the people not to practice their righteousness before men to be noticed by them. Instead, they should give and pray and fast in secret. This teaches me that good deeds should flow out of gratitude for what you’ve done for me, not out of a desire to be praised by men. If I’m not doing good to please you, then I’m doing it to please myself. Second, Jesus told the people not to worry about their lives, what they would eat or drink or wear. Instead, they should seek first your kingdom and your righteousness, and all the rest would be given to them. This teaches me to overcome the worries and anxieties of life by remembering that you have promised to meet my needs. If I put you first and remain committed to kingdom ministry, you will take care of my physical, earthly needs. Third, Jesus told the people not to judge and condemn each other. Instead, they should pardon freely and give abundantly. This teaches me not to have a critical spirit toward others. Instead of finding fault with them and refusing to pardon their offenses, I should treat them with the mercy and kindness with which I would want them to treat me. Fourth, Jesus told the people to be fruit inspectors, for there would be many false prophets who would come to them “in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” This teaches me that it’s both necessary and appropriate to judge whether a person’s behavior and teaching is right or wrong. There’s a big difference between spiritual vigilance and a harsh, fault-finding spirit. I should be as loving as I can, while at the same time I should be careful to avoid false doctrine. Lastly, Jesus told the people that they should not call him ‘Lord’ and then ignore his commands. They could do many great deeds in his name, but if they didn’t heed his words, they would never enter the kingdom of heaven. This teaches me that it’s easy to claim to be a disciple of Jesus, but the proof is found in faithful obedience to his commands. If I say I’m a Christian and my life doesn’t back up my claim, I’m only deceiving myself and setting the stage for my own destruction.

Reflection

Jesus said that if I don’t forgive others when they sin against me, you won’t forgive me when I sin against you (Matt 6:15). Is there bitterness in my heart toward anyone? Have I forgiven my debtors?

Request

Father, help me to hear the words of your Son and keep them with all my heart. I want my life to be founded on obedience to your commands, so that when the storms of life come, I will stand fast.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for giving to those who ask and keep on asking, and for opening to those who knock and keep on knocking. How grateful I am to serve the One who knows how to give good gifts to His children!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Strait and Narrow Is the Gateway](#)” – Duane Troyer.

Meditation Verse: Matthew 7:13–14.