

# Prayer's First Words (2)

“This, then, is how you should pray:  
“ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...’ ”  
Matthew 6:9 (NIV)

If you really want to learn how to pray, you need to study the great prayers of the Bible.

Prayers like Nehemiah 9, Daniel 9, and Acts 4:23-31 all begin with tremendous expressions of worship and praise to God.

As you put these prayers in their historical context, you see that the people are under enormous pressure because of tragedy in their situations.

For example, the prayer in Acts 4 is the result of the authorities arresting and jailing Peter and John overnight. The next morning they brought the apostles before the court and made many threats against them if they continued to preach Jesus. Finally the men were released.

As the church in Jerusalem heard the report of Peter and John, they instantly went to prayer. But the prayer was not rushed and fearful.

Reading Acts 4:23-31, you can almost imagine how the tension leaves them as they recognize God's enormous power—as disclosed in the Scriptures they quote to Him.

They start with God and not the problem.

Starting with the correct view of God always brings our problems down to a manageable size.

Considering our resources in the Lord—before describing our issues and needs—will help us get the right perspective on the situation.

One day as a young boy I was following my uncle as he ploughed a field in preparation for sowing seed. Walking ahead I crested a hill before him and the team of horses. Suddenly as I looked across the field I saw a bear looking up at me.

Immediately I ran back to hide behind my uncle. I didn't have any idea of what he would do with the bear but I trusted him with the problem. Needless to say my uncle solved the problem readily.

Sometimes our prayer needs to be as simple as that action of mine so long ago. We simply put the Lord between ourselves and the situation.

We let Him decide what to do with the matter while we safely

hide behind Him.

An example of such a prayer is in John 11:3 (NIV) “So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick.’”

There is no request made of Jesus. The sisters do not tell Him what to do, they only state the problem and leave it at Jesus' feet.

Occasionally we are reduced by the trauma of life to a simple statement of fact.

Addressing Jesus as ‘Lord’—as the sisters did that day—is a tremendous help to us as we recognize that the power of the entire universe is contained in that name.

Will you make your first words in prayer today statements recognizing the supreme power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Pray as they did in biblical times and you shall prevail.

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