

Into the Throne Room

Every single day, we all experience the same longings that must be satisfied: hunger, thirst, & rest. This is why every day you sleep, you eat, and you drink. If you don't do these three things everyday, you may survive briefly, but you will inevitably die. We all know how it feels when we go without eating. Our stomach literally yells at us. We become irritable, cranky, and intolerable (Snickers has an entire ad campaign around this). We all know how it feels when we go without drinking. We get dehydrated, weak, and parched. We want to drink anything that's liquid. Our brains will even create mirages of water fountains when we get thirsty enough. We all know what it feels like to go without sleep. Our eyes begin to burn and our eyelids feel like lead. Our brains begin to malfunction, and we'll begin to feel like we are on drugs. When we go without food, or without drink, or without sleep our body will become desperate. And when we are desperate, we must take the necessary action. The Bible tells us that our spirits, our hearts work the same as our body. Just like our body has longings that need to be satisfied, so does our hearts.

Psalm 42:1-4 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

Psalm 63:1-8 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, 6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; 7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

In Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus helps us to understand prayer by helping us to see that the Father is the only one who can satisfy our longings and cravings.

Big Idea: We have access to the Father who satisfies all of our needs.

Two core needs that drive us to our heavenly Father in prayer

1. Our need for intimacy

Matthew 6:5-6 And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

- notice the "when" here, and not the "if" – Jesus is expecting his disciples to regularly engage in prayer
- the 3 rules of real estate apply also prayer: location, location, location
- the pride in being perceived as spiritual
- the seclusion model of Jesus' prayer life:

Matthew 14:22-23 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

Luke 6:12-13 In those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Luke 9:28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

2. Our need for transparency

Matthew 6:7-15 And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this: Our Father 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- there is a tension between intimacy and majesty that is resolved in transparency

- intimacy lends itself to transparency, whereas attention lends itself to ceremony

Some of you are probably thinking, "Whoa Dave, you are way ahead of me here - I don't even pray. Why do I need to pray if God already knows everything? What's the point? Besides, I don't even know what I would pray."

- if you have ever said that or thought that, then this text was written just for you – Jesus tells us that God's knowledge is not the barrier to prayer but the reason for prayer:

Matthew 6:7-8 And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, **for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

- our Father is the King (this is exactly what we need) – the foundation for glory and grace (notice the use of God as "Father" 8 times in this text)

- moreover, if we don't know what to pray for, this model prayer provides an outline & priorities:

1) Hallowed be your name, 2) Your kingdom come, 3) Your will be done, 4) Give us our daily bread, 5) Forgive our sins, 6) Deliver us from evil

- this pretty much sums up all of the Bible's prayers & psalms

- note about the text of the prayer: earliest manuscripts leave out the last part (it's not wrong to include because the words are still true)

Matthew 6:13 For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- emphasis on forgiveness highlights our desperate need for our Father (note that Jesus didn't need to pray for forgiveness)

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- forgiven people are forgiving people – forgiveness is what drives us our transparency with our Father and each other

Big Idea: We have access to the Father who satisfies all of our needs.