

Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

***“Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil 4:6)***

Today is the birthday of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. His favourite passage in the Bible was the Sermon on the Mount. A portion of this Sermon (Mt 5:3-10) is engraved in the Gandhi Memorial in the city of Chennai. Reading through the Sermon on the Mount once a month will keep our walk trim before God and man.

Matthew 5 through 7 can be actually called a Sermon on Prayer. Here the Lord elaborates more on prayer than any other subject. At the very heart of this passage is a prayer which we call the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13). The priority Christ demands for prayer in our life cannot be overstressed. We shall be meditating on these passages today and the next four days.

□ **Mt 5:6**, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”

Prayer is a great sanctifier. A sinning man stops praying and a praying man stops sinning. The passion for righteousness should outrank our physical hunger and thirst. E. M. Bounds (1835-1913), an Apostle of Prayer, said, “Prayer and a holy life are one. The absence of one is the absence of the other.”

□ **Mt 5:8**, “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.”

Do not rush into prayer inadvertently. The heart must be quietened and mind calmed to see if there is any wicked way in us. Our prayers should begin with, “Search me, O God!” Hidden and unconfessed sin weakens prayer. It hides God's face (Isa 59:2). *Take time to be holy!*

□ **Mt 5:23,24**, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled and then come and offer your gift.”

Prayer is an altar. Cain must get right with Abel if God should accept his offering. While talking about reconciliation, we are not to find who is on the wrong. The one who comes to the altar should take the initiative to reconcile. A clear conscience means being right with God as well as with man. A. B. Simpson (1843-1919), the Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has this observation: “The spirit of prayer is essentially a spirit of love.”



Gracious Heavenly Father,

We worship You as the prayer-answering God. We thank You that You delight in our prayers as a father delights to listen to his children. Thank You for the innumerable prayer promises in Your Word inviting us to seek Your face anytime for any need. Thank You, O God, for the boldness You have given us through the blood of Your Son to approach the Throne of Grace. We praise You for Jesus who sits on Your right hand to plead for us. We thank You that You are able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Dear Lord, we thank You for Jesus who has taught us to pray. Yes, Father, He only knows Your heart perfectly. We open up our hearts before You seeking Your cleansing. Nothing can be hidden from Your sight. You know the thoughts and intents of our heart. Tell us, O Lord, where we have disobeyed You and displeased You. Create in us an intense hunger and thirst for righteous living than for food and drink. Free us from all self-righteousness when we come to You so we may totally depend on the righteousness of Christ.

Father God, we confess that we fall into temptations mainly because we don't watch and pray. We depend on our will-power not realizing that Satan can outwit us. Help us, O God, to understand what Jesus has told us that apart from Him we can do nothing. Lead us into total reliance and dependence on You and Your power. We pray for the weak areas in our life where we fail again and again. You are our Strength, O God. You are our Fortress, O God. You are our Shield, O God.

Dear Lord, we are sorry for the words we have spoken against others and our unloving deeds. How can we love You whom we have not seen if we don't love those whom we have seen? Flush out all hatred, bitterness, evil-speaking, vengeance, and the like from our hearts. Have You not loved us freely? Give us the humility to retribute matters with those whom we have wronged. Soften our hearts, O God. Bless us, O God, with the largeheartedness of Abraham to give preference to our brother Lot. Adorn us, O God, with the spirit of forgiveness of Joseph to bless those who have worked against us. Give us the heart of David who refused to take vengeance on Saul who sought his life. Help us to always maintain a good conscience like Paul not only before You but also before men. "Glory to God in the Highest and Good-will towards men!" — Let this be the rule of our life. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

*(Psa 18:2; 65:2; 91:2; 139:1-7; Mt 5:6; 6:6-13; 7:7-11; 26:41; Heb 4:15,16; 10:19-22; Eph 3:20; Isa 64:6; Jn 15:5; 1 Jn 4:20; 1 Pet 2:1; Gen 13:8,9; 50:20; 1 Sam 24:6; Acts 24:16; Lk 2:14)*