

God Hears Our Prayers

(Go To Meeting)

Tom Fannin—March 9, 2024

I want to start by just saying that **God absolutely hears our prayers** and:

- He pays attention to them
- He enjoys them
- He enjoys hearing from us

as we'll bring out here in the message!

But what I want to look at here with this message is:

- Why does God hear us?
- Why does he hear us?

How we approach God makes all the difference in our prayers! We want to be mindful of that. too.

When we think about God and Jesus Christ in heaven, it's good to think about Who They are and consider what we come for when we go to God in prayer.

So let's just kind of see a summary of the things that are in heaven and what's going on.

Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and *to the* Church of *the* Firstborn, registered *in the* Book of *Life* in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all, and *to the* spirits of the just who have been perfected; and to Jesus, *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant; and to sprinkling of *the* blood of *ratification*, proclaiming superior things than *that of* Abel" (vs 22-24),

So think about what we come for when we pray to God. God Almighty on His Throne, the true Holy of Holies with Jesus Christ sitting there at His right hand. Think about the 24 elders and the four living creatures and all these angels, and it talks about the spirits there.

We know that there's a spirit that returns to God who gave it, but the spirits of those written in the Book of Life.

So pretty amazing what God allows us to appear before and come before and what should be on our mind when we go to God thinking about His glory and Who He is and **He allows us to come to Him!**

We know Christ gave us instructions on how to pray and what manner to pray as a model.

Matthew 6:9: "Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: 'Our Father, Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name.'"

So it's important for us to remember just Who God the Father is, *the Almighty God and He is Holy! He is perfect!* Giving respect to Who He is, His name and honor is very important. When we approach God it's good just to remind ourselves Who we come before.

- Do we enjoy talking to God? *That's something for all of us to think about!*
- Is it something we enjoy?
- Is it something we look forward to?

I know all of us pray throughout the day, at various times and with various lengths of prayer, and sometimes, I'm sure, you take a special time you set aside for prayer, and we probably pray *continually* all day.

- Do we enjoy it?
- Do we enjoy talking to God?

When you first come into the Church, or give an admonishment, it's important to spend time every day praying and studying.

Certainly as we do this we start to get to a point where we enjoy it. We enjoy the time we get to read and hear what God is speaking to us through His Word. Then the time we have just to talk to God, we look forward to that.

So, it becomes more than just what I'll call a checking of the box every day where we say that 'I've had some prayer time and I've had some study time.' ***It turns into more that relationship where we look forward to the time we get to spend talking with God!*** God listens to us, doesn't He? ***We know God listens to us!*** One thing I want to bring out here is that ***God is listening!***

A lot of times we talk about listening being an art; how important it is to listen to others. When we think about Who God is, ***He's a perfect listener!*** God's perfect in all His ways, and ***He's also a perfect listener!*** He's listening and watching intently. So, we have to think about that, too.

Psalm 141:1: "O LORD, I cry to You; make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice when I call unto You. Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (vs 1-2).

So, as David is bringing out here, he's saying let this be for God. Our prayers are precious to Him. He enjoys hearing us and listening to us. So it's good for us to keep in mind that **He is really paying attention to our prayers!**

Likewise, when we pray to God we need to have full attention and direction to Him in our speaking and in our words.

Why is it we can approach God? *The Almighty God!*

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him'" (vs 6-7).

So, we can approach God because of what Christ did for us becoming a perfect sacrifice and the grace given to us through Christ for all those who are in covenant. **We can approach God through Christ through the Spirit!** *We know we have God's seed within us:*

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship..." (vs 14-15).

We know this when we receive God's Spirit the down payment, the seed of begetting, the earnest as it's called until we receive the full, we're sons and daughters of God.

"...whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father'" (v 15).

Just think about that because of the covenant we're in, and receiving God's Spirit we can approach God "...we call out Abba Father." **That's how we recognize God, the Almighty God is our Father!**

Ephesians 6:18^[transcriber's correction]: "Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

So, we approach God through the Spirit, through spiritual minds, we know through God's Spirit there's many works done through us:

- the Spirit gives us understanding
- the Spirit gives us wisdom
- it's the Comforter
- it helps us

but we pray to God and approach God through the Spirit that He's given us!

In Romans it talks about how the Spirit cries out for us; things within us that we need. That's how we are to pray to God: **through his Spirit!**

A very important thing, too, is **how** we can approach God and **why** we can approach God.

Ephesians 3:9: "And that I might enlighten all *as to* what *is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places*... [we just talked about that back in Hebrews] ...according to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith" (vs 9-12).

Why can we approach God? *We can approach God:*

- through Christ
- through the very faith of Jesus Christ
- with boldness

We have access, and we can be confident in that access, and we'll talk about boldness later in the message. This is why we can approach God. It's good to be mindful of that and remind ourselves why we can come before God.

We want to talk a little bit about what God looks for in our prayers and the kind of approach we should always have when we come before God.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where then *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD..." (vs 1-2)

You think about all the things God and Jesus Christ have done and Their infinite wisdom and the power They possess and the love that They have. But with all this said, and all the things They've done and are doing and all this universe and all Their creation, we can look at what it says here:

"... 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (v 2).

So, when we think about how we approach God in our prayers to God this is important and we'll be seeing the same theme throughout the Bible of how our attitude should be and what God's looking to.

"...a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word" (v 2).

We talked about the model prayer, and again, talking about what God is looking for in our prayers and our approach to Him.

Matthew 6:5: “And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.”

Does this match what we saw there in Isa. 66:1-2? *It doesn't seem like that's the same mind here and Christ says not to be like them, the hypocrites!*

Verse 6: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*; for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard” (vs 6-7).

Our prayers aren't like that, our prayers are very personal to God. We enjoy the time we have with God when we pray and our prayers come from the heart and from the Spirit, like we mentioned earlier.

Verse 8: “Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.”

We know that there's not a thought that can be hid from God, right? He knows what's going to come off our lips even before we speak it, and God knows what our needs are.

Verse 9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: ‘Our Father, Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your Kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven” (vs 9-10).

So, we approach God always with the attitude of, ‘God, we're looking for Your will in our lives, and Your direction.’ There is a manner in which we are to pray before God and be mindful of.

We know this is the account of a Pharisee and a tax collector in:

Luke 18:10: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one *was* a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector” (vs 10-11).

So, he's talking to God and just kind of exalting himself there, isn't he? He's not like other people and he's certainly kind of probably looking

over at the tax collector and thinking that ‘I'm not like him.’

Verse 12: “‘I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithe *of* everything that I gain.’.... [a little bit of ‘horn tooting’ there] ...And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted” (vs 12-14).

It's the approach to God and our attitude towards ourselves and who we are. We're nothing without God and Jesus Christ, are we? So they're looking for these things in us and our approach and our prayers comes out.

I want to cover something in Daniel that God recognized.

Daniel 10:11: “And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for to you I am now sent.’ And when he had spoken these words to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come because of your words” (vs 11-12)

There's a lot there. A couple things we can pick out from this is the humbleness that Daniel had, but also what was in his heart. His prayers to God were to be able to understand. That's how we should be, too, in our approach to God from the heart, wanting to understand, coming before God with this mind:

God, I want to understand:

- more about You
- more of Your will and Your purpose for me
- more of the direction You desire for me in my life
- to be able to be led by You by the Holy Spirit

God heard this and recognized this. Hopefully, *we have that same mind and attitude that Daniel had!* Understanding God's will, wanting to know and understand God's will.

2 Kings 20:1—*hear the prayer of Hezekiah:* “In those days Hezekiah was sick to death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live””

That would be hard to receive that message. He was sick and it looks like he was going to be sick unto death. He received the message that he was going to die, and to get his house in order.

Verse 2: “And he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, ‘O LORD, I pray, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before You in truth and with a sincere heart, and have done good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept with a great weeping” (vs 2-3).

I think for all of us that if we were put in this situation, we may have a similar prayer and similar thoughts.

Verse 4: “And it came to pass, before Isaiah had *even* gone out into the middle of the court, the Word of the Lord came to him saying, ‘Return again and tell Hezekiah the prince of My people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD’”” (vs 4-5).

Well, that’s good to remember what Hezekiah did there and certainly that was an attitude of humbleness. There wasn’t any exaltation there, but he poured himself out to God and God heard that prayer.

It points out there, too, that God not only said that He heard the prayer, but He saw Hezekiah’s tears. So, God hears and He’s also seen. He saw the very tears coming out of Hezekiah’s eyes when he wept and prayed that prayer.

So, again, all these things are written and recorded for us so we can think about ourselves and how we approach God in prayer and what He looks to.

Psalm 32:1—*David says*: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silent, my bones wore away through my groaning all the day long, for by day and by night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgression to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this *reason* let every Godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near him” (vs 1-6).

A good point here to remember is don’t be silent; don’t hold these things in.

- God wants us to come before Him

- God wants us to acknowledge to Him our sins and our weaknesses

so we can have help! When we’re silent, as it says here, we’re kind of within the inside rotting away. So, we don’t want to be silent, brethren. ***God doesn’t want us to be silent!*** He wants us to come before him and acknowledge all the things we need to acknowledge! He’s quick to forgive and have what we know to be true repentance, and that’s change.

The point here is ***don’t be silent in all the difficulties, problems trials and also the sins*** that we have in our lives, ***but come to God!***

Psalm 34:11: “Come, hearken to me, you children; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?” (vs 11-12).

Think about this not only in our physical lives but also our eternal lives:

Verse 13: “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry” (vs 13-15).

So again, he’s looking to the righteous and we know we are the righteous because it’s been imputed to us through Christ.

Verse 16: “The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are of a contrite spirit” (vs 16-18),

As we mentioned earlier, that theme continues throughout God’s Word, who He looks to and who He’s listening to. But our part again is our mind and our attitude and how we approach God.

I want to talk a little bit about what doesn’t please God.

- Are there things that we can be doing? *I’m going to be mentioning specifically here in prayers, being mindful of our prayers!*
- Are there things that don’t please God that we can be doing? *The answer we know is yes!*

God does hear our prayers, but there are things we can be doing where God is not pleased, and we also have to be very mindful of that. We’ve already covered a couple of things there, haven’t we?

Matt. 6:

- don’t be like the hypocrites
- don’t be like the Pharisees and some of the others and what they’re doing

Luke 18:

- the self-exaltation we saw there with the Pharisee and the publican.

But while we're in Psalms let's turn back to Psa. 66 and bring out something else that we need to be mindful of.

Psalm 66:16: "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me; surely God has heard; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His steadfast love from me" (vs 16-20).

- we don't want God to turn away from our prayers
- we don't want to be in a position where God doesn't hear us

*But we need to pay attention to what v 18 says: "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.**" Christ's instructions, we know He talked about:*

- what's inside the man *defiles the man*
- out of the abundance of heart the mouth speaks

So, it's good for us to examine ourselves and what's within our heart and what we regard. We need to work on this all the time and examine the sins in our lives and what we may be doing. You know there are certain things God doesn't want us to be regarding and sin is very powerful and it's something we work on continually to get out of our lives.

The point here is that God does not hear when we regard sin. So again, something for all of us to consider.

Now, a lot of times when we pray... I'll just say we have to pay attention when we're praying to God. Even sometimes in prayer we can have things maybe come into our mind that we shouldn't. When we're before God's Throne pay attention to that, too. If you have distractions or things come up in your mind while you're praying get those things out. Don't have regard for them. **Remember Who we were before when we pray!**

Psalm 5:1: "Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my meditation. Harken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray" (vs 1-2).

We want God to hearken, we want God to listen to us and He does. But we have to look at ourselves and what we're doing.

Verse 3: "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will look up, for You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness; nor shall evil dwell with You. The boasters shall not stand in Your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloody and deceitful man" (vs 3-6).

This is part of examining ourselves, considering where God is at. He's in a Holy Place where sin doesn't exist. So, we have to work very hard ourselves as we approach God and come to God and be mindful of:

- Who He is with
- what He demands
- what He wants us to come out of

Just part of self-examining is what it is, and where we're at with these things.

I'll go back now to 1-Peter 3 and bring out something else that's very important as far as God hearing our prayers and thinking about things maybe that God wouldn't be pleased with.

1-Peter 3:7: "Likewise, *you* husbands, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, giving them honor *as* women, and as joint heirs of *the* grace of life..."

So men/husbands are to dwell with their wives according to the knowledge given to us through God the wisdom that comes from God's Word. We're to dwell with them that way, acknowledging them as joint heirs.

"...so that your prayers may not be cut off. Now, the goal *is that* all of you *be* of one mind, sympathizing, loving the brethren, compassionate *and* friendly; not rendering evil for evil, or abuse for abuse, but instead a blessing, knowing that you were called to this: that you should inherit a blessing" (vs 7-9)— ***blessings in this physical life but also the blessing of eternal life!***

Again, this is a continual thought: it talks about how a husband should be with their wives, but then it goes on to the Church and how the brethren should be with one another. God is inspiring Peter to write this so your prayers don't get cut off.

Verse 10: "For the one who desires to love life, and to see good days, let him restrain his own tongue from evil, and not allow his lips to speak deceit. Let him avoid evil, and let him *continually* practice good. Let him seek peace, and let him *earnestly* pursue it, because the eyes of *the* Lord *are* on *the* righteous, and His ears *are open* to their supplications. But *the* face of *the* Lord *is* against

those who practice evil” (vs 10-12),

What I just want to bring out here is our conduct right. Considering one another how we treat one another how we love one another it's important to God it's an important to our approach to God in prayer also and certainly forgiving one another. We want God to forgive us so having an attitude where we're loving and forgiving each other God requires that also.

Another thing I want to bring out here in the message is just as important as we read there when we think about others and love others considering others that we continue to pray for each other because God wants us to be doing this.

James 5:14: “Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (vs 14-15).

That's an important thing! We mentioned faith when it comes to anointing; that we believe and trust in those anointings and those healings. We have faith in those things through Christ; who says:

Verse 16: “Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed....”

The emphasis here is that we need to be praying for each other; it's our part! We want to be healed ourselves; we want to help ourselves so yes, we are to pray for one another.

“...*The* supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective” (v 16).

It goes on here to talk about the example of Elijah; v 17: “Elijah was a man of emotions like ours, and he prayed earnestly *that* it would not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth *for* three years and six months. And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and caused the earth to sprout its fruit” (vs 17-18),

Just a point here that our prayers are effective and God looks to them and God hears them, but we need to pray for each other.

When we pray to God we should be praying on our knees, and we have examples of that from Christ, Daniel, Solomon and Peter where they prayed on their knees. But we know, too, at times as people get older or have health issues and you think about things like hip replacements or knee replacements that I've heard some say it's really impossible for them to be able to get down on their knees.

If we can't then we pray lying down or in a position where we can have an effective prayer to God. But we should try to pray on our knees; but if we can't we do the best we can I just want to bring that out and some are in certain health conditions where they can't pray on their knees. But certainly they can pray lying down in their beds and we know that David talked about that, prayed lying up on his bed.

Something else here I want to bring out when it comes to prayers is study. A lot of you may get up early in the mornings and have prayer time as the first thing you do, and maybe later in the day have study time depending on your schedule. Maybe something to do occasionally is have some study time before you pray and you might find that to be very effective, too.

I think about study time when we read God's Word and we know it's inspired and the men who wrote it were inspired by God's Spirit to write it. Paul talked to Timothy about it and His Word being God-breathed.

When we read God's Word it's really like God talking directly to us. How many times have you picked up God's Word and started the study or started reading and all of a sudden something inspiring came out of it that was for you, and you knew directly for you, for that day whatever was going on in your life something came out you needed to hear directly from God that day.

So, that's why sometimes it's good to have some study time and listen to what God is telling us, listen to Him *first*, and then maybe go to prayer after that and talk to God about what we've heard.

Think about these things! Certainly prayer and study is so important and very, very effective.

I believe it says in Thess. 5 to pray unceasingly! We need to continue to come to God and come to Jesus Christ in prayer.

We're told we can come with boldness to God. This is brought out in:

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.”

That's how God's work works in us, and that's why we study God's Word!

Verse 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom

we must give account.”

We should never forget that when we're before God or whatever we're doing in our lives He continually knows what's going on there's nothing hidden from Him at all.

Verse 14: “Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession of *our faith*. For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to the likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He was* without sin” (v s 14-15).

We know Christ knows what it's like to be us in the flesh as He sits there at the right hand of God intercedes for us.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

We don't come in our own mind in a bold way before God and Christ, but we're told by Them that you could come to the Throne with boldness. We have that confidence that from Them and from Their Word; They tell us you can come to the Throne with boldness, with confidence in our prayers ***so we can receive grace and mercy in time of need!***

- we all need help
- we all have times of need

That's why God's there for us in Jesus Christ!

Yes, They hear and They want us to come to the Throne! They don't want us to be quiet; They want us to approach Them!

Brethren, as we conclude here what a blessing it is for us to have the knowledge of the Truth; that we most importantly know Who God and Jesus Christ are, and Their love for us.

- God hears us!
- God hears our prayers!

So, let's approach Him continually in a way that pleases Him and just continue to thank God and Jesus Christ that They've called us and that They're a part of our lives.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 12:22-24
- 2) Matthew 6:9
- 3) Psalm 141:1-2
- 4) John 14:6-7

- 5) Romans 8:14-15
- 6) Ephesians 6:18
- 7) Ephesians 3:9-12
- 8) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 9) Matthew 6:5-10
- 10) Luke 18:10-14
- 11) Daniel 10:11-12
- 12) 2 Kings 20:1-5
- 13) Psalm 32:1-6
- 14) Psalm 34:11-18
- 15) Psalm 66:16-20
- 16) Psalm 5:1-6
- 17) I Peter 3:7-12
- 18) James 5:14-18
- 19) Hebrews 4:12-16

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