

# FIVE FORKS BRETHERN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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**SERMON:** *The (-ions) of Prayer: Part 1*

**SERIES:** *The Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*

**SCRIPTURES:** *Luke 11:1-2, Genesis 2:25 – 3:11, Hebrews 4:15*

**SPEAKER:** *Brady Smith*

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*\*Credit to the Tyler Staton, author of "Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools\*"*

Good morning Five Forks Church, it is great to have you with us this morning. As we look to get our message started, I'm going to ask that you bow your heads once more as we pray to our great God.

*Pray \*Slight pause after prayer concludes\**

Wow, what an amazing thing prayer is... We cry out to our Creator and He listens. The Lord Almighty.

Lately I've been trying to let that thought resonate in my mind, and it's still just insane to me! We call out, and He listens. It's simply incredible.

That's why we want to continue diving into **The Wonder and Mystery of Prayer.**

Last week we got things started by discussing how we want to start moving beyond the excuses that hold us back from praying, and instead focus on the reasons of why we need to start praying.

Now, for these next two weeks we want to begin diving deeper into what I'd like to refer to as... **The (-ions) of Prayer**

As I have delved into this wonderful and mysterious world of prayer, I have found that there are 4 words ending with "-ion" that are absolutely essential to grow and connect deeper with God through prayer. Those four words are...

**Adoration**  
**Confession**  
**Petition**  
**Participation**

Our goal today is going to be breaking down these first two words of Adoration and Confession, and then we'll close off the series next week by looking into Intercession and Petition.

Also, I do want to give credit to Tyler Staton and his book, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, for the inspiration behind this sermon series. It's a great read that I'd highly recommend!

Alright, let's get started by talking about...

## **I. Adoration**

At the beginning Luke 11, the disciples presented Jesus with this request,

["Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." \(Luke 11:1\)](#)

When Jesus looked to answer this question of how to pray from the disciples do you know what he did? He started praying!

"You want to know how to pray? Follow this model and begin by praying something like this..."

["Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name." \(Luke 11:2\)](#)

These are words I suspect most of us have heard thousands of times, perhaps even quoted and spoke ourselves thousands of times. But let me ask you... Have you ever taken the time to ask why Jesus says to begin a prayer like this?

I'll be honest, I never really took the time to think deeply about that until recently, and what I discovered is pretty incredible. Let me share that discovery by breaking down some of the key phrases and words in this verse, starting with...

## A. “Father in Heaven” (Who We Are)

Whenever I pray I typically begin by saying the phrase, “Heavenly Father”... It was something I heard my Dad say when he started his prayers, so I followed in his footsteps and started doing the same.

I have now gotten into the habit of beginning my prayers like this and it is now something that just rolls right off the tongue.

It’s like when I’m at a Penn State football game and I hear someone say, “WE ARE”... I just instinctually say, “PENN STATE” without thinking twice. It just rolls off the tongue.

But when Jesus began his prayer by calling God, “Father”... It was so much more than something that just simply rolls off the tongue. It would have been SHOCKING, almost scandalous. The disciples probably did a double take whenever they heard Jesus beginning his prayer this way. Why?

Because to the disciples, God was...

- **The provider of The Law.**
- He was **the God of the Ten Plagues**, commanding the Israelites to put blood on their door posts.
- **God was a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night** helping to guide the Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt. (Exodus 13:21)

To the disciples and all of the Jews at the time, God was known for being great in power, yes... But they did not view God as someone you get to know personally.

So when Jesus begins his prayer, “[Our Father in Heaven...](#)” It would have absolutely shattered the disciples’ paradigm of how they viewed God.

Now, it’s important to note that when Jesus prayed this way and as he taught his disciples, he was never introducing them to a “new God”. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said,

[“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.”](#)

Jesus is not diminishing the reverence of God, instead what he is doing here as he teaches us to pray is to say, **“God is KNOWABLE”**. God is not this distant cosmic being, no... God is someone you can get to know, God is like a FATHER.

It reminds me of a story I heard about a 4-year-old boy and his Dad...

Those of you who have raised boys, you know they can be a little ornery at times... Such was the case for this 4-year-old boy. But this particular boy was pretty clever, because every time he would do something bad he would always say this,

**“But you’ll always love me no matter what, Dad.”**

“Hey! You were only supposed to have 1 cookie, why are you eating a second?!”

**“But you’ll always love me no matter what, Dad.”**

It’s time for you to go to bed, no more trying to stall saying you need to use the bathroom, and no more extra episodes of Bluey!

**“But you’ll always love me no matter what, Dad.”**

Yup... You’re right buddy. I’ll always love you, no matter what.

As Jesus teaches us to pray, I believe he wants us to be reminded of who we are... We are children of the King, children to our Heavenly Father. Who will love us no matter what.

Tyler Staton put it like this,

**When we pray, “Our Father,” we are really asking God to remind us again today that we are loved.**

Let me ask you, do you recognize this in your prayer life? Do you see the love that God has for when you pray? This is a key part of what praying with adoration does, it allows you to remember and reflect on who you are as a child of God. May you remember that as you pray in adoration, but may you also remember the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this verse...

## B. “Hallowed Be Your Name” (Who God Is)

The word, “**Hallowed**” is what I like to refer to as one of those “churchy” words. It’s a word we’d never really use in typical day-to-day conversation, but it’s one we will quote and use to describe God. So what does it mean?

Simply put, Hallowed means... **“To make Holy” or “To set apart, sanctify, consecrate, dedicate”**

The closest commonly used English word to “hallowed” would probably be the word “**honor**”.

And so as Jesus teaches us to pray, he first reminds us of our relationship to God, like a Father and child. But then with the word “Hallowed” we are reminded of who God is. We are reminded of his majesty, of his separateness, of his incomprehensible greatness!

Jesus tells us to begin our prayers remembering this and praising God for who He is...but why?

Because you might be wondering, “Why does God, this all-powerful being, need me to praise Him and tell Him how great He is? I’m just a creation of His imagination, so is God really that insecure that he needs my praise?” The answer to that is a very simple... No.

When Jesus taught us to begin our prayers by “**Hallowing**” we are not doing it for God’s benefit, but we are doing it for our own. In our world of self-centeredness, where we often will view ourselves as “The Main Character” in the TV show called life... When we begin our prayers by “Hallowing” we are reminding ourselves of who God is and who we are not.

In the midst of Hosea 11 as God shares His love for Israel, He reminds us of this core truth,

**For I am God, and not a man— the Holy One among you. (Hosea 11:9)**

That is who God is, and we must remember that as we begin our time of prayer.

Now, you might think we're done breaking down Luke 11:2, but there's one word we missed at the very beginning...

### C. "Our" (Who We Are To Each Other)

Earlier we explained how Jesus referring to God as "Father" was pretty scandalous, but what really set it over the edge was how Jesus didn't just label God as HIS Father, no... He described God as OUR Father.

This may seem like a minor detail, but there are some MAJOR implications here. Let me example by giving an example...

Recently when driving to BWI Airport I was getting pretty frustrated at the amount of traffic. There's a reason I love living here in rural Franklin County!

But as I sat at almost as standstill with thousands of cars there with me... I realized something. Every single person in one of those vehicles has a story.

I have forgot the sacredness of each person... I had turned people I didn't know into just "extras" in the show called "Brady's Life". Oh how arrogant I can be... but as I pray the phrase, **"Our Father" I am reminded who I am to God, but also, who each and every other person is to God as well.**

We are brothers and sisters of the same family, with our Father in Heaven watching over us. May we be reminded of that when we pray.

It's astonishing see how just 8 words can provide so much depth, but these words of Adoration remind us of...

**Who God Is**  
**Who We Are**  
**Who We Are To Each Other**

Let us always remember this when we pray.

Moving on to our second "-ion" word for this morning's message we reach...

## II. Confession

I've heard it described that Adoration in prayer is like the fun songs being played at a wedding reception. Going out on the dance floor doing the Cotton-Eyed Joe, Cupid Shuffle, and Cha Cha Slide having a blast!

But then Confession... Confession is like when you are there without a date and the slow song comes on... You know, Frank Sinatra's voice serenading everyone with "Just the Way You Look Tonight" ...

Although you may not have looked forward to it, you knew it was going to happen at some point. That it NEEDED to happen at some point because it wouldn't be a proper wedding reception without some slow dancing.

That is what Confession is in prayer... Something you may not look forward too, but something that is ABSOLUTELY NEEDED.

Very few people knew this true better than King David in the Old Testament. All throughout the Psalms we find examples of his occasional moments of confession in his prayers to God.

A prime example is Psalm 24. First, listen to how he starts it off,

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; <sup>2</sup> for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

It's starts as this beautiful prayer of adoration and celebration! And then all of a sudden like a completely different person is now writing he says,

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart...

The one who has clean hands and a pure heart... And that's not me.

I can imagine David admitting this in defeat as he sang and shouted it at the top of his lungs. Because to experience the fullness of God means you need to confront your faults and mistakes in confession to Him.

**Confession isn't a suggestion, it's a REQUIREMENT.**

Now, before we get any further into this discussion on confession we need to address...

### **A. The Bad News**

Have you ever heard or even said the phrase, **“WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?!”**

I imagine the answer is yes for every single one of you...

A tragic shooting happens in a school... **“WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?!”**  
Parents abandoning their children... **“WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?!”**  
Constant war and violence... **“WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?!”**

The sad part about this question is that it's simply nothing new... In fact, G. K. Chesterton from the United Kingdom wrote a book with this very question as the title back in 1910. **(PICTURE OF BOOK COVER)**

While this book is 201 pages long, Chesterton's answer to this question can actually be summarized into 3 words... **“I AM WRONG.”**

What's wrong with the world? It's me.

But what makes me wrong? What makes you wrong? What makes every single one of us wrong, regardless of the time period and location?

The answer is a 3-letter word I assume we are all familiar with... **Sin.**

Now the interesting thing about “Sin” is that despite being such a small word, it is actually one of the most complex words found in the Bible. The reason I say this is



because throughout the Old Testament alone there are 8 different Hebrew words that are directly translated into the word “Sin” here in our English Bibles.

While it is certainly complex, I really like how Staton explains it,

**“Sin, defined by biblical imagination, is not an accusation or a condemnation; it’s just a diagnosis.”**

Like going to the doctor’s office sharing your symptoms and they say, “You have this disease.” And what do diseases do? That they get in way of how you were created to live your life.

Those who battle chronic illnesses understand that better than anyone... It constantly disrupts your way of living. And that’s exactly what sin has done in our world. It has disrupted us from living how God intended.

**We were created to LOVE – Give and Receive Love**

Sin gets in the way of that! Sin gets in the way of us receiving and giving love to God, of receiving and giving love to each other!

If you want a clear example of this, just look at the first couple of chapters in our Bible! Check this out, right after God created the world, created humanity we see this description for Adam and Eve in Chapter 2, verse 25...

<sup>25</sup> Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The reason this is so fascinating is because I have found that this verse has very little to do with explaining their current physical appearance, and everything to do with talking about the current state of their souls.

They felt no shame. No guilt. No pain... They were pure. That is until we turn the page to Chapter 3 and we see these two terrifying words as the header... **The Fall.**

As Adam and Eve fall victim to the serpent’s deception and their own temptations, sin plunges into the world, and now all of sudden in Genesis 3:7 we read,

<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

They recognized their nakedness and immediately feel shame, starting to cover themselves up. But it goes even further because when they hear God walking through the Garden they immediately try to hide!

In their shame and sin they ran and hid. That's the instinctive response that human sin leads too. Hiding. Turning "Naked and unashamed" to "Covered and ashamed".

And it's in verse 11 where Adam and Eve are hit with the question that I imagine sent shivers down their spines...

["Who told you that you were naked?"](#)

In other words God is asking, "What happened to the innocence, the purity of my children? Why have you gone against me?" That's what sin does... it is personal, and it's always against God.

As David put it in Psalm 51, a Psalm known as "The Prayer of Confession" he said,

["Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..." \(Psalm 51:4\)](#)

When we sin it's not against some law or a rulebook...we sin against God, we sin against Our Father.

When you give in to those lustful desires and look at that pornography... You sin against our Father.

When you are quick to anger, screaming and yelling at your kids over something minor... You sin against our Father.

When you gossip and slander someone behind their back... You sin against our Father.

Where does that leave us? Ashamed and covered. Unable to love God and others the way we were created to do.

That's some bad news... but it's not the end of this story because now we reach the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of confession...

## B. The Good News

\*Sigh\* - A nice sigh of relief. We're talking about the Good News! But how did we get here?

Going back to our story in Genesis 3 we see the fallout of Adam and Eve's sin. They are banished from the Garden and start heading east...but they aren't going alone!

God goes with them, he pursues after them still despite their brokenness. And this is really important...

**God does not lower his standard of holiness, but He still comes after us!**

He does not compromise who He is, but instead looks to raise us up. That's the Biblical story! It's of a pursuing God who is pursuing after you, even when your instinct is to run and hid in your sin, he pursues after you.

We see that throughout all 66 books of the Bible. We see a God with an unconditional, agape love for you. A love for you that cannot be lost, even when we are deep in our sin.

Listen to how the author of Hebrews describes Jesus' response to sin,

<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

The word empathize in this verse is actually translated from the Greek word: **Sympatheo**

Now there's something absolutely fascinating about "sympatheo" because it's actually a compound word of two smaller Greek words.

The first part is the prefix: **Sun** – "With" or "Co-" Kind of like when you'd call someone who works with you a CO-worker

The second part of the word is the Greek word: **Pascho** – "To suffer" Pretty straight forward there.

Now if you put all the pieces together you're left with a more proper translation being... **Co-Suffer**

That's how Jesus deals with our sin... He suffers with us.

When you are feeling that unrelenting weight of your sin, Jesus is there to come alongside and bear it with you.

So often we think that God is only with us when things are going well... The job is going well, family is doing good, financially secure... We'll sit and think, "God must be really with me right now!"

But what we just read in Hebrews says the almost opposite! Jesus is right here with you, if not even closer to you, as you face your weaknesses, failures, and mistakes. You simply need to be willing to share and confess them to him.

As it says in 1 John 1:9,

[9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.](#)

That's the good news with confession. It's sharing your sins, your "disease", with Jesus, who's been nicknamed "The Great Physician", so that the shame and pain can be removed.

If you want to begin experiencing life the way we were intended... To feel unashamed, to be able to genuinely give and receive love... It starts with confession.

### III. Practice Rather Than Theory

Alright, similar to last week, for the last few minutes of this morning's message I want to present you all with a challenge. As we go on this journey to dive into the wonder and mystery of prayer, breaking down Adoration and Confession, it is absolutely crucial that we take time to PRACTICE applying these into our prayer lives!

Let's first talk about...

#### A. Practicing Adoration

There are many ways we can begin incorporating adoration in our times of prayer, but I'd like to give you three suggestions.

First is... **Musical Worship**

The incredible thing about musical worship is that it has this way of making of allowing us to feel emotionally connected to God, but also intellectually connected to God with the words we sing.

In a moment we are going to sing these words,

**8:00 AM – “Search me O God, and know my heart today. Try me O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.”**

**9:45 AM – “You're the way, the truth, and the life. You're the well that well that never runs dry. I'm the branch, and You are the vine. Draw me close and teach me to abide.”**

Singing out a simple chorus like this can be a great reminder of who God is, and who we are to Him.

Second... **Pray a Psalm**

Practically right in the middle of your Bible are 150 Psalms that contain some of the most heartfelt prayers. When you are at a loss for how to pray in adoration, it

can be sometimes be finding a particular Psalm and just reading through it slowly and word for word.

When you find that word or phrase that sticks with you as a form of adoration, use that as your prayer!

### Third... **Gratitude**

The final way to practice adoration is getting into the habit of practicing gratitude.

I have found this to be best to practice at the end of the day. Where you reflect back and see where God's working presence occurred that day...

You can reflect on God's presence during that moment where your child laughs with glee.

You can reflect on His presence from that successful work day where lots of progress was made.

You can reflect on His presence from that conversation of catching up with an old friend.

**While God's presence is always with us, sometimes our awareness of His presence can falter, thus we want to be practicing gratitude daily in our quest for a prayer life of Adoration.**

Alright, let's move on now to...

### **B. Practicing Confession**

To practice confession begins with having the same mindset as David in Psalm 139:23,

[Search me, God, and know my heart...](#)

The fact of the matter is that God knows you better than you know yourself. God knows every blemish and mistake in your life. If we truly want to remove that shame and guilt that comes with sin, it means going to God and ask Him to reveal yourself to you.

It's embracing humility, our theme for this year, as you let God in and start breaking down your walls.

After you allow that time for self-examination and allow the Holy Spirit to be the searching agent within your heart and mind, you can then get ready to confess.

And confessing is as straight-forward as it sounds... Whatever God revealed to you, speak it out loud to Him in confession. That's it!

Staton explains it like this,

**When we name it to God, we “bring it into the light,” which weakens the power of sin and calls on the power of grace for healing and freedom.**

If we want to connect deeper with God through prayer, we must begin practicing Adoration and Confession regularly. Because despite these two words feeling like polar opposites, both are essential when it comes to true, authentic prayer.

**PRAY**