

### 28.33d Sermon on the Mount—Do Alms, Pray, Fast (Matthew 6:1–18; Luke 11:2–4)

(Although the Matthew and Luke sermons were probably given at different times, because of the similarity of the passages, we are combining them in the Sermon on the Mount stories.)

☒ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

#### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *alms*: liberality to the poor and needy; anything given to them to supply their wants (Barnes in Online Bible).
- *hypocrites*: taken from *stage-players*, who act the part of others, or speak not their own sentiments, but the sentiments of others. It means here, and in the New Testament generally, those who hide their real sentiments, and assume or express other feelings than their own; those who, for purposes of ostentation, or gain, or applause, put on the appearance of religion (Barnes in Online Bible); pretenders
- *synagogue*: the place of assembling for religious worship (Barnes in Online Bible)
- *hallowed*: to pronounce something to be holy
- *to fast*: not to eat or drink. In a time of grief or sorrow we are not disposed to eat; or, we have no appetite. The soul, when oppressed and burdened by a sense of sin, is so filled with grief, that the body refuses food (Barnes in Online Bible).
- *prayer*: the expression of creature-need and dependence (FWG in Online Bible)

#### Scripture Passage (NKJV):

Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

2 So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.”

Matthew 6:1 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: 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 forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

### **Introduction/Review:**

We are looking at a sermon called . . . [The Sermon on the Mount]. Why do you suppose it has that title? [Jesus delivered it on a mountain.] For whom was this sermon intended—all the people or the followers of Jesus? [The followers which would include the disciples.] No doubt others were listening too.

In Matthew 5 Jesus gave the Beatitudes. What are Beatitudes? [Blessings.] Give an example of one of the Beatitudes. [Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Those who mourn. . . shall be comforted; The meek . . . shall inherit the earth; Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness . . . shall be satisfied; The merciful. . . shall receive mercy; The pure in heart . . . shall see God; The peacemakers . . . shall be called sons of God; Those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; When others revile you and persecute you . . . for your reward is great in heaven.]

Also in Matthew 5 Jesus taught the disciples to be salt and light in this world. What does that mean? [Preserve from sin; spread the truth.] Jesus spoke of the Law. Even though the scribes and Pharisees thought He was breaking the Law of Moses, He said He came to fulfill it, not to break it.

Then, still in Matthew 5, Jesus gave a bunch of “You-have-heard-but-I-tell-you” statements. They had heard, “You shall not murder,” but Jesus said . . . [“Do not be angry”]. They had heard, “You shall not commit adultery,” and “Give a certificate of divorce,” but Jesus said . . . [“Whoever looks at a woman to lust . . . has already committed adultery” and “There’s no reason for divorce”]. They had heard, “Do not swear falsely,” but Jesus said . . . [“Swear not at all”]. They had heard, “An eye for an eye,” but Jesus said . . . [“Don’t resist an evil person”]. They had heard, “Hate your enemy,” but Jesus said . . . [“Love your enemies”].

All of that Jesus said in Matthew 5.

### **Story:**

In the beginning of Matthew 6, Jesus talked about giving alms, about praying, about forgiving, and about fasting. What is giving alms? [Doing good deeds for someone in need.] Now, what do you suppose Jesus would say about how someone should do that? I’ll give you two choices: let everyone know about doing good, or do good quietly and without praise or notice? [Doing it without praise or notice.]

The following is how the hypocrites gave alms:

Hypocrite: [Make sound of a trumpet.] Here we are in the streets, folks. Do you see this poor man here begging for food. I will now give him a dollar.

People on the street: Wow! Isn’t that generous?

Hypocrite: [Accepting praise.] Thank you! Thank you! [To the poor man,] Now, poor man, go buy a loaf of bread. [End of dialogue.]

Jesus said God would not reward this kind of alms-giving. The hypocrite had his reward—the praise of people.

Rather, observe this scene, the way Jesus said to give alms:

Alms-giver: [At someone's house in more modern times, speaking privately without anyone else around.] I've heard that you need some medical work done and don't have the money for it. Here's a thousand dollars. I hope it will cover the need. No one needs to know where it came from, and you don't need to pay me back.

Now, the amount of money given is not the issue but the way in which the alms is given. Jesus said not to let even your left hand know what your right hand is doing when you help someone. Do it in secret. The Lord, who sees in secret, will reward openly.

Here's a story about a real man, Oberlin, who was rescued from death in the snow between Strasbourg and the Ban de la Roche in France by a waggoner. The waggoner did a good deed, another kind of alms-giving. When the rescued man offered a reward, the waggoner would not take it.

"Okay, tell me your name then."

The waggoner replied, "Tell me the name of the Good Samaritan in the Bible."

The rescued man said, "His name is not recorded in the Bible."

"Then," replied the waggoner, "permit me to withhold my name as well" (WNT 63 in Online Bible).

### ***Praying***

Here's another hypocritical scene:

Hypocrite: [Eyes closed.] Here I am standing so that everyone can see me on the corner of Main and Broadway. [Dramatic and shouting.] O God, Thou who art the Maker of heaven and earth, hear my prayer. [Open one eye to peek; then continue.] Have mercy on these poor creatures who walk by me this day, *etc.*

Of course you know that kind of praying—to impress people—is not what God wants. Rather, Jesus said, "When you pray, go into your room (or closet—a private place) and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. Your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you." (A former pastor's wife of our church actually did use a closet in the parsonage for her place of prayer.) There is a warrant for public praying but never for hypocritical praying.

Let's check on the hypocrite on the street again.

Hypocrite: O God, Thou who art the Maker of heaven and earth, hear my prayer. O God, Thou who art the Maker of heaven and earth, hear my prayer. O God, Thou who art the Maker of heaven and earth, hear my prayer.

What's going on with this prayer? [The man is repeating the same thing over and over.] Now, repetition is okay, but not *vain* (empty) repetition. "It is not much *praying* that is condemned; no, we are bid to *pray* *always*, but much *speaking* . . . when we only *say* our prayers, and not when we *pray* them" (Matthew Henry in Online Bible).

You know, before we ever pray, God knows about our need; yet, we need to pray, humbly, secretly, reverently.

### ***The Lord's (and Disciples') Model Prayer***

Jesus then gives us a model prayer. We often call it the Lord's Prayer. Some call it the Disciples' Prayer. It is worthy of memorization for at least two reasons: Occasionally Christians who gather together will pray this prayer together instead of having someone lead in prayer. Also, as has already been said, it is a model prayer, one from which we can learn what content should be in our prayers.

The model prayer begins, "Our Father" (KJV). We need to think of the privilege we have to use the name, *Father*. Before Christ the Son came, Old Testament people did not refer to God as their Father. Christians today have a special relationship with God: He is our *Father*.

“Who art in heaven.” God is everywhere, but His special dwelling is in the third heaven, far above all powers.

“Hallowed be thy name.” God’s name/person is holy—totally holy! We come before Him reverently.

“Thy kingdom come.” “The word *kingdom* here means *reign*. . . . The petition is the expression of a wish that God may reign everywhere; that his laws may be obeyed; and especially that the gospel of Christ may be advanced everywhere, till the world shall be filled with his glory” (Barnes in Online Bible).

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” “The *will* of God is, that men should obey his law, and be holy” (Barnes in Online Bible). This surely happens in God’s presence; may it be done on earth too.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” In this petition we are asking God to supply our needs, not just food but other needs that come up as the days come—things that would maintain our testimony as children of God.

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” *Debts* here are not unpaid bills but sins. Sometimes when this Lord’s Prayer is prayed in public, people pray the translation, “forgive us our *trespasses* as we forgive *those who trespass against us*.” Trespasses, too, are sins.

“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Temptations are trials, afflictions, or other things that test us. Trials and afflictions are good for us in that they cause us to grow in our spiritual lives, but we are also praying that those temptations not overpower us—that we remain true to Jesus.

We sing the Doxology in our church. What is the first word of that song? [Praise.] That’s what *doxology* means—praise. The Disciples’ Prayer also has a doxology at the end of it. We find it in the King James Versions’ Matthew 6, but it is not in some other translations or in Luke 11, where the Model Prayer is given again. Therefore, when praying this prayer in public, it is often left off. However, it is a wonderful doxology, and we should learn it.

“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” To God belongs His kingdom, His omnipotence—power—and great praiseworthiness—His glory—forever and ever!

“Amen.” In this case, we usually pronounce this word, “Ah-men,” especially when the word is sung (unless in a spiritual like “Amen! Amen! Amen!”). *Amen* means “may it be” and indicates certainty. We believers in Jesus Christ can pray and know He hears us!

### ***Forgiving***

After saying, “Amen,” Jesus went back to a point mentioned a little earlier in the prayer—forgiveness. “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:13, 14). This sounds quite serious. Let’s look at forgiveness.

The Greek word for *forgive* has the idea of sending away. Here’s an example: Suppose I have a possession—maybe a figurine of a Japanese goddess—that I know is not good for me to have, for God wants me to have nothing to do with false religions. But I love that figurine! I want to keep it because I like to think about how pretty it is and how nicely it decorates my house.

One day I realize that I must get rid of that figurine because it is a hindrance to my Christian life. So I send it away: I put it in the trash, and the city takes it away. I never see it again, and it never hinders my Christian life again.

Now, let’s apply that to someone’s doing something hurtful to me. If that person asks me to forgive them (and even if they do not ask me to forgive), I need to “send away” that hurtful act from my mind, never to see it again. Oh, I may remember the act, but I choose no longer to blame and hold a grudge against the one who hurt me. In another Matthew passage (18:22) Jesus told us to forgive seventy times seven. How many times is that? [7 times 7 = 49; annex the tens’ zero; = 490 times.] “That’s too hard to do!” you and I might protest. Yes, but God gives believers grace to do it, even if it’s 490 times for the same offense. Send that

grudge away forever.

We have sinned against God, haven't we? How would we like it if He did not forgive us? We have offended Him far more than anyone has ever offended us. Since He forgives the sins of those who confess their sins to Him, don't you suppose we can forgive those who offend us?

### ***Fasting***

One last topic occupies our thoughts in today's lesson. It is the topic of going without food in order to pray. It is a good thing for adults to do on occasion or regularly. In times of great sadness or need, our bodies sometimes don't even want food. In these times, especially, we need to pray.

Remember the hypocrites—the people who did religious acts in order to impress other people. To their credit they did, at least, fast, which is more than most of us do. However, showmen as they were, this is how they did it: They didn't wash their faces or comb their hair. They might even have put ashes on their heads and faces. The ashes combined with their (fake) tears, made a mess of their faces. All this to make people (and maybe God) think they were holy people.

Does God know the heart of the hypocrite? Absolutely! Does He know your heart—your intentions and motives, your every spiritual thought as well as every daily action? Yes!

Should we fast? Yes. (Children should not fast, however.) Should we let everyone know we are fasting? No. If and when we fast, we should do it so that no one else is aware of our going without food. God sees us in the secret place of our hearts. He is the only One who needs to know if and when we are fasting. He is the One from whom we request our petitions.

Let us not ever be hypocrites, but let us give alms, pray, forgive, and fast with a true heart!

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- Sincerely and humbly give alms, pray, forgive, and fast.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: coins, trumpet
- This site has some good ideas for activities: [https://www.sermons4kids.com/teach\\_us\\_to\\_pray.htm](https://www.sermons4kids.com/teach_us_to_pray.htm)
- Have students play-act the hypocrites and sincere people in alms-giving, praying, forgiving, and fasting.
- Have students show various positions in which one can pray, which is virtually any position, depending on the situation at hand.
- Watch a video on YouTube of Jackie Evancho, a young girl with a voice mature beyond her years, sing "The Lord's Prayer" by Mallotte at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voljGr1jZ8E>.
- Sing "The Lord's Model Prayer" found at the end of this lesson.
- Sing the following copied songs: (Sorry, I don't have the sources to give credit for these.)

"Pray Today" (Tune: "Deep and Wide")

Pray today, pray today; to God, our Father, pray today. (repeat)

"It Shall Be Given You" (tune: "Farmer in the Dell")

It shall be given you. (repeat)

Ask, yes, and do believe

It shall be given you.

Oh, pray in Jesus' name. (repeat)

God listens to your prayers;

So, pray in Jesus' name!

He hears ev'ry prayer. (repeat)

God's Word says He's always there

To answer every prayer.

- Summarize the story found below of George Washington's praying at Valley Forge.
- Review Questions: (Game: A correct answer entitles a student to place a coin in a container.)
  1. What is the term for a person who is a pretender? [Hypocrite.]
  2. What did hypocrites do? [Drew attention to themselves; pretended to be religious.]
  3. What is alms-giving? [Giving to someone in need.]
  4. In what manner should people give alms? [Quietly; not to be seen of others.]
  5. When Jesus finished praying, what did His disciples ask Jesus? [To teach them how to pray.]
  6. In what manner should people pray? [Do so privately; do not use vain repetitions.]
  7. What is fasting? [To go without food.]
  8. In what manner should people fast? [Not appear to be fasting; to wash.]
  9. Give one request of the Lord's Model Prayer. [Hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors; And do not lead us into temptation; Deliver us from the evil one.]
  10. What is the doxology of this prayer? [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.]

### Memory Verse[s]:

Matthew 6:9–13 (KJV): Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### Handwork:

- Prayer chain: Have available 6-inch strips of various colors of construction paper. Students write prayer requests on each strip and staple strips to make a paper chain. The chain can be hung in the student's room in order to remind him or her to pray for those requests ([http://www.sundayschoolcrafts.com/Prayer\\_Chain.html](http://www.sundayschoolcrafts.com/Prayer_Chain.html)).
- Before class print and prepare take-home booklets for this story called "Jesus Teaches Us to Pray." The online source for ordering or downloading for \$12.99 is <https://www.carsondellosa.com/products/0499--New-Testament-Take-Home-Bible-Stories-Resource-Book-0499#/?book%20media%20type=f389e45b92884d48844baaf09d49e3c5>. The book is less expensive at other sites, but those sites do not offer the download.

**to do alms**

**hypocrite**

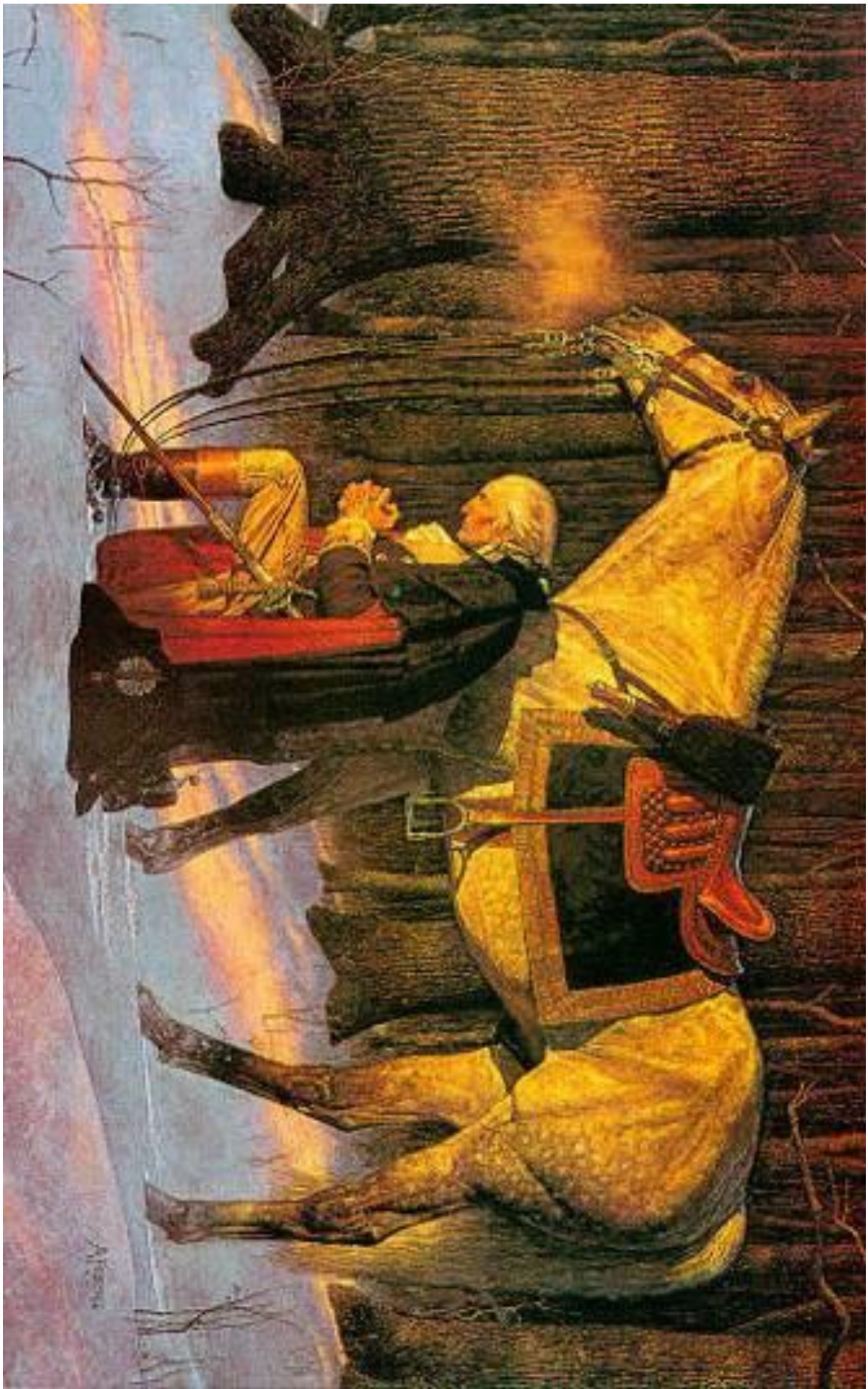
**synagogue**

**hallowed**

**to fast**

**to pray**





George Washington praying at Valley Forge





A waggoner

## George Washington's Praying at Valley Forge

Anna Reed relates one of the most vivid stories of General Washington's spiritual life that occurred when the General and his troops were in winter quarters in Valley Forge, not far from Philadelphia. Various artists have attempted to capture this scene with their brushes. After describing in some detail the hardships under which the American troops lived at Valley Forge, Reed proceeded to relate the following anecdote of General Washington's prayer life. She begins with a quote from a letter the General was writing to Patrick Henry concerning the hardships of the soldiers. General Washington was surprised that the soldiers did not lament the conditions at Valley Forge:

In describing their condition in the hut-camp, he said [in his letter to Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia], "For some days there has been little less than a famine in the camp; but, naked and starving as they are, I cannot enough admire the incomparable fidelity of the soldiers, that they have not before this time been excited to a general mutiny or dispersion."

The inhabitants of the surrounding country, knowing this sad state of the army, were very uneasy; one of them left his home, one day, and as he was passing thoughtfully the edge of a wood near the hut-camp, he heard low sounds of a voice. He stopped to listen, and looking between the trunks of the large trees he saw Gen. Washington engaged in prayer. He passed quietly on, that he might not disturb him; and, on returning home, told this family he knew the Americans would succeed, for their leader did not trust in his own strength, but sought aid from the hearer of prayer, who promised in his word, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." A female, who lived at the Valley Forge when the army was encamped there, told a friend who visited her soon after they left it, that she had discovered that it was the habit of Washington to retire to a short distance from the camp to worship God in prayer. Many, who in "the day of prosperity" have forgotten or neglected to worship their Creator, will earnestly call upon him in "the day of trouble," when they feel that His power only can deliver them; but it was not thus with Washington; it was his constant custom as one of his nephews has thus related: "One morning, at daybreak, an officer came to the general's quarters with dispatches. As such communications usually passed through my hands, I took the papers from the messenger and directed my steps towards the general's room. Walking along the passage which led to his door, I heard a voice within. I paused, and distinctly recognized the voice of the general. Listening for a moment, when all was silent around, I found that he was earnestly engaged in prayer. I knew this to be his habit, and therefore retired, with the papers in my hand, till such time as I supposed he had finished the exercise, when I returned, knocked at his door, and was admitted." Thus, in obedience to Him whom he called "the Divine Author of our blessed religion," Washington, in the retirement of his chamber, prayed to his "Father who seeth in secret," and truly his "Father, who seeth in secret," did "reward him openly."

(<https://christianheritagefellowship.com/george-washingtons-prayer-at-valley-forge/>)











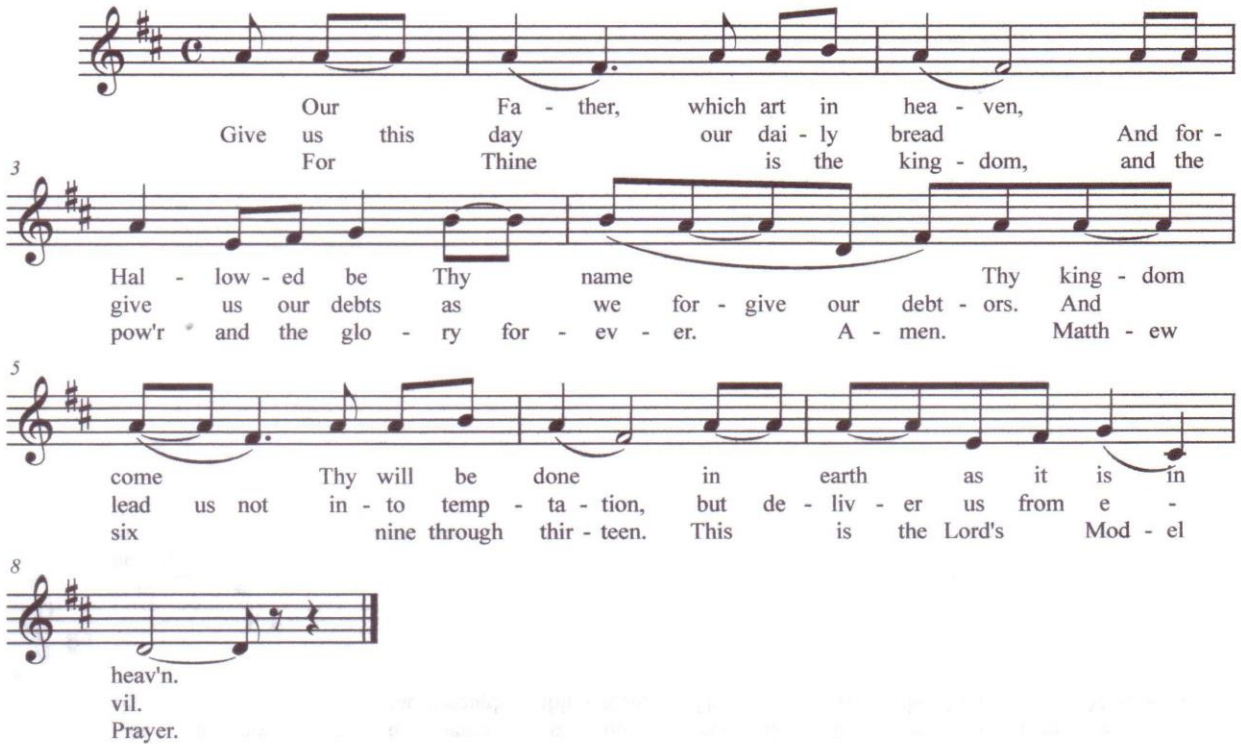




# The Lord's Model Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

M. Alexander



Our Fa - ther, which art in hea - ven,  
Give us this day our dai - ly bread And for -  
For Thine is the king - dom, and the  
Hal - low - ed be Thy name Thy king - dom  
give us our debts as we for - give our debt - ors. And  
pow'r and the glo - ry for - ev - er. A - men. Matth - ew  
come Thy will be done in earth as it is in  
lead us not in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from e -  
six nine through thir - teen. This is the Lord's Mod - el  
heav'n.  
vil.  
Prayer.

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