

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 82

November 27, 2020

Section 54 The Sermon on the Mount

A. T. Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels

Welcome to the next edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way through the Sermon on the Mount right now, but we began this series many months ago. When the virus (COVID 19) started we actually began to record this series. We had been, obviously, going through this and *not* recording it for some weeks, but we do have transcripts all the way back to the beginning that are available to you. The Online videos that we've been doing goes back to, I believe, March of this year (2020), and they are archived on our "You Tube channel at Central Sarasota church of Christ, <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> website, and you can find them there.

The Mind of Christ study is a very in-depth study. I did it over a period of seven years starting in 2010, and I tried to look at everything Jesus said and did to ascertain how He thinks so that I could, perhaps, understand His mind and begin to *think the way He does*. I know I've failed in that, but I gave it a good try, and I'm sharing with you some of the raw notes that I journaled starting in 2010.

We're going to continue on the Sermon on the Mount. We're moving into a new section but I won't be able to finish this section today. It may take me three messages to actually finish it but we are going to get a good start today. It's in Matthew Chapter 6 and I am going to read verses 1 through 8 for today. I am reading from the **New American Standard Bible**, because that's what I study out of for my in-depth study Bible.

### Matthew 6:1-8

Jesus said, "Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> "Therefore, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites** do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they will be praised (or honored) by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your charitable giving (alms) will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> "And when you pray, you are not to be like the **hypocrites**; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But as for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup> "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

We will reserve the study of what we normally call "The Lord's Prayer" and we'll begin that next week in the next message.

So, we return to the idea of “reward” here, and this has already been looked at over in **Matthew 5:12, 46**. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors, do they not do the same? See **Lessons 75 on October 9, 2020** and **Lesson 81 on November 20, 2020**.

Previously, Jesus taught that as “light” we must “be seen”. That’s what “light” is for; it is to “be seen.” We are to shine, He says, *before men* but we do it in such a way that they will see our good works but they will actually *glorify the Father who is in Heaven*. **Matt. 5:16**. *If we do* our works merely to be seen by men we forfeit our reward.

Jesus has also told us that *our righteousness must exceed* that of the Scribes and Pharisees in **Matthew 5:20**. In this, we might find ourselves in some contest by which we highlight *our righteousness* to prove that “we” are more righteous than “they” are. This kind of *competitive righteousness* is not glorifying to God. But with all this said, there is still a tension between ‘our light shining’ and ‘our secretive giving’. Does a church use its ‘good programs’ (and I’m just asking some questions about maybe how we, perhaps even violate, the spirit of what Jesus is saying here, but it’s a question mark for me). Does a church use its ‘good programs of helping orphans’ etc. to sell its church to the community, or should we keep any ‘good works’ that we do ‘quiet’ before the community? Do we “brag” on members who ‘do good’, or do a good job in some area? Do we have banquets to honor those for long service?

If we stick with the illustration that Jesus uses here, that is blowing trumpets to announce the righteous act personally drawing attention to ourselves in our good work, then we have that tension about “are we doing that?” We may not be literally blowing trumpets but are we calling attention to ourselves? *Self-promotion* is in the act of blowing the trumpets, but what of resumes, or announcing awards in connection with an organization to which you’re connected? This gets really tricky when we try to apply this teaching to our lives.

*Anonymous giving* is tough. Someone is going to find out what we’ve done ... at least the treasurer of the organization will know what we’ve given. Even the widow who gave the small amount was commended by Jesus and she was not totally anonymous, but she did not make a big deal about it. **Luke 21** does not seem to be emphasizing the point of secrecy, but there is a picture one gets in this story of ‘a little old lady, barely noticed by the crowd, because of being completely overshadowed by the rich people who were making a “show” of dropping their coins or their money into the collection plate. But *how* were the rich supposed to give without calling attention to themselves? How could they have given otherwise? Well, maybe there was any number of ways that they could have given without making a big deal about it; a spectacle out of it.

The application of Jesus’ teaching is tougher than first appears. Is it like a teen girl’s dress? When I say that, I’m comparing this to ‘modesty’. We kind of know ‘modesty’ when we see it and we know immodesty when we see it, but it’s very hard to define. And so it is also when we call attention to ourselves when we are giving. We kind of know it when we see it, like this person is ‘grand-standing’. They’re really trying to be noticed. Then there are others who are just putting money into the plate being passed around and are not doing it for some show.

Jesus leads this passage with the word, “beware” or “to take heed”. The word in Greek is (προσερχω) “prosecho” meaning “to hold to”, “to bring near”, “to apply the mind to a thing”. We give heed to it, we attend to it, we observe it, and we consider it, so we translate it “beware”. Jesus uses this word in **Matthew 7:15** regarding the “false prophets” who come to you in sheep’s clothing. We are to be **aware** of them. Gamaliel used it in **Acts 5:35** when he said, “And he said to them, “Men of Israel, **be careful** as to what you are about to do with these men.” He says to take **care** of what you **propose**. In other words, if you are going to make a proposal, beware of what you propose.

**Hebrews 2:1** says, ‘pay close attention’ or ‘beware’ ... lest we drift away from what we have heard. **2 Peter 1:19** uses the same word, “And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to **pay attention** as to a lamp shining in a dark place ...” **Acts 20:28** “**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” The shepherds are to be aware... In **Acts 8:6** the multitudes were “paying attention”; they were “being aware” of Philip. In **Acts 8:10** says that they had also “paid attention”; they were “aware” of Simon the sorcerer. In **Acts 16:14** Lydia was “listening to” Paul; she was paying attention; she was ‘being aware’. The word could also mean “**addicted to**”, “**to give oneself up to**”, “**to engage in**”, or “**to be occupied with**”.

**1 Timothy 1:4** says, “**Don’t pay attention**” to myths and endless genealogies for these give rise to speculations rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. Now, this word, “**administration**” is important and I want to talk about that a little bit again. The word **administration** is a **household** word that means “economy” or “management” or “stewardship”. In **1 Corinthians 9:17** Paul has a **stewardship** entrusted to him.

In **Ephesians 1:10** the word is used and it speaks here of God’s grand **administration** that sums up everything pertaining to Jesus. So everything that pertains to Jesus, going back even to the Old Testament, is His **administration**, it’s His **economy**. In **Ephesians 3:2** it’s about the **stewardship** of God’s grace. “...you have heard of the administration of God’s grace which was given to me for you.” In **Colossians 1:25** it speaks of God’s **stewardship** that has been bestowed upon Paul. “I was made a minister of this church according to the commission from God granted to me for your benefit.”

This is a rich word. **My point in looking at this is to be focused on God’s administration and our part in this will determine how we manage the resources that He gives us. Let me flesh that out a little bit more. We’re talking about ‘giving’ here. We manage His funds, for His good and His purposes. This should cause us to **give in a way that calls attention to His goodness and His generosity**. It is **God’s money, it’s His time, it’s His energy, it’s His wisdom, and it’s His life** to be used by us to bring glory to him and to accomplish His purposes. So when I give, I’m merely writing the check for God. Oh, I might sign my name at the bottom so the bank will actually cash it, but it’s really God’s checking account and I’m simply an accountant writing out a check on **His** behalf.**

In **Matthew 6:2** it may be the first time that Jesus uses, in what is recorded in the New Testament, the first time He uses the word “**Hypocrite**” but it will not be the last time. A **hypocrite**, as we know, is an **actor**, under an assumed character, it’s a stage player.

A **hypocrite** is a dissembler used often in Matthew. In **Matthew 6:5** it is used of those who pray “to be seen”. In **Matthew 6:16**, “Now whenever you fast, do not make a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they distort their faces *so that they will be noticed by people* when they are fasting.” In **Matthew 7:5**, it is used for those who try to remove a speck from another person’s eye while there is still a log in their own eye. **They are all “hypocrites”**. “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye!” In **Matthew 15:7** talks about people who give ‘lip service’ to God; and the King James Version states that those who give lip service are said to be *hypocrites*. The King James even adds the word in **16:3** but it’s not in the Greek text. In **Matthew 22:18**, those who tested Jesus about paying taxes are called “**hypocrites**”. In **Matthew 23:13-15**, the toughest sermon that Jesus ever preached and He uses the word hypocrite often there, He says, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven in front of people; for you do not enter it yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. <sup>15</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” Here Jesus even says the hypocrites will one day be in hell!

Jesus does not want our life to be a mere act, a drama, a stage play. He does not want us to just “play a part” or to “give a performance” for others to see, so that they will give applause to us. We don’t “take a bow” at the end of life. We simply bow before the One we have lived for.

What a picture to get in our heads! “Performing” is really a dangerous business. It is so hard to remember “why you do what you do” and “why I do what I do”. Is it for the clap at the end ... a bunch of other actors making noise for you hoping you will make noise for them when it’s their turn to take the bow? Or is it about “showcasing” your gifts ... gifts given by another? But even that can be dangerous. Do I show off my gifts so others will know how special **I** am or to show how special the **Giver** is?

Living authentically is tricky. “Why do I do what I do” is a big part of living. “What am I after?” “What’s my motive?” Do I really know who **I** am and who **He** is? Do I really understand that it’s not about me; it’s about Jesus! Instead of sounding the trumpet, it may be ‘drum roll’ please! The trumpet was an attention-getter. Look at me! I’m going to do something that will *impress* you, so pay attention to me. Here it comes! Are you ready? Is my make-up right? Do I know my lines? Do I have everyone’s undivided attention? Okay ... raise the curtain! Turn up the lights.

It just occurred to me that we often speak of our expressions as being mirrors of who we are, so why aren’t these outward expressions of authenticity that we want others to see? Perhaps we have to add something to ‘authenticity’ to keep it from becoming self-centered. Perhaps authenticity with godly integrity is what we need. My realness is meant to highlight what **God** has given me, what He has done in me and through me. The Father is the author of my authenticity. As **Ephesians 2:10** says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” I am His masterpiece or poem! I am **His** work. If people are applauding for Him when I perform then perhaps that’s okay.

Tim Tebow (and this was written back in 2011), Tim Tebow is having trouble with this right now. He is, I believe, the real deal ... spiritually, and his 'on field prayer' bending the knee just as Daniel did with the windows open, are now being ridiculed and mocked all over Denver. Some may do it to make fun, and others as a show of respect and imitation. Here again is the tension of **Matthew 5:16**, "[Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven,](#)" and also **Chapter 6**. Does it all hinge on 'motive'; or even if we have the right motive there are some things to be done "quietly" and "in secret".

According to Jesus, the motive of the hypocrite is to be 'honored by men'... not just *seen* by them, but to be 'honored by them'. The word "honored" here is (δοξαζω) "doxazo" meaning "to esteem", to glory, to honor, and to magnify. In **Luke 4:15** Jesus' preaching resulted in praise or honor by all. But in **John 8:54**, Jesus distinguishes between self-honor and the honor or glory He received from God. In **Acts 13:48** the Gentiles glorified the Word of God. "[When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord](#)". In **Hebrews 5:5** Jesus did not glorify Himself in becoming the High Priest; He was glorified by His Father.

In **Revelation 18:7** to the degree that she (Babylon) or (Rome) glorified herself, and lived sensuously; to the same degree give her torment and mourning for she says in her heart, "I sit as the queen, and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning." She was glorifying herself and this is what Rome was doing.

The subject of "*glory*" and "*honor*" is huge. The emphasis in Scripture is away from **self-glory** to **God-glory**; glorifying Him and receiving glory from Him. The word "secret" is a word that means "hidden" or "concealed" or "clandestine". In **Romans 2:16** Paul says there will be a day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus. This is the context of a discussion about the conscience. I suppose these secrets could be good ones instead of 'bad' secrets. In **1 Corinthians 14:25** the unbeliever who is convicted by all and called to account has the secrets of his heart disclosed causing him to fall on his face and worship God. In **Ephesians 5:12**, Paul talks about the disgraceful things done in secret by those in darkness. On a brighter note, Paul says in **Colossians 3:3** that we have died to our life and our life is hidden with Christ in God. It becomes secret, in a secret place hidden with Christ.

In **John 19:38** Joseph is spoken of as a secret disciple. "[Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders.](#)" Secrecy has many contexts, some positive and some not so positive. We are prone to 'want to be seen' when we do something which is commendable and to get the recognition for it. But we most often want to hide what is not commendable. Perhaps **Romans 2:14-15**, does explain this; how the conscience both accusing and defending us. "[For when Gentiles who do not have the Law instinctively perform the requirements of the Law, these, though not having the Law, are a law to themselves,](#) <sup>15</sup> in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them <sup>16</sup> on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of mankind through Christ Jesus." When being accused we want to hide and become secretive, and when defended by our conscience we seek to be open or set the record straight to defend ourselves.

To reveal sin now, the Bible says, leads to forgiveness, but to conceal sin leads to future judgment. To reveal good works now leads to having our reward now by men; but to conceal them now leads to a future reward by God. So, *the formula is, I believe*, reveal sin and conceal 'good works' leading to *forgiveness and future reward*. This is, somewhat, of a generalization, but I believe it's a helpful one.

Clandestine (secretive) good works could be a very exciting life. Doing things for people without their knowing it, or knowing who did it, could be fun! Our lives would be free of complicated days in the spotlight. It would be fun to watch people's public reaction to good deeds done in secret. Do we really believe that God's reward will be there for such acts?

Regard prayer, I can see where this might tend to naturally be more private as opposed to our giving which is a transaction between two people or two parties. However, Daniel and Jesus Himself provide me with a couple of illustrations which challenge my application to this thought of 'secret prayer'.

In **Daniel 6:10**, Daniel ended up in the lion's den because he prayed three times a day where he could be seen with an open window. Most often, Jesus did go to a private place to pray, but in **John 12:28** Jesus made a short prayer and was answered by God. "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Of course, Jesus also prayed from the cross. We make public prayers often, and on the occasion of a meal, at special gatherings, at official events, or even at services, at funerals or weddings or other religious opportunities we say public prayers.

But again, this issue goes back to  *motive*. Do we do so to be seen by men? Closet prayer causes us to be more *intimate* and *transparent* before God ... just me and Him. I need the inner room; the time to study and listen to God and to pray and to talk to God. To think that God is observing this time, as even I write this back in 2011, and that He might reward me for what I'm doing is a sobering thought.

*He sees. He knows. He cares and He values what I do. He's my Father who is in secret. He's a Father in the secret places ... the private God; the intimate time with the Father that only He can share with each one of us and communicate personal love and concern for each one of us.*

As I write this, an emotion swells within my heart ... God ... here with me ... this morning ... in a hotel room in Orlando as beautiful music plays in the background. He, my Father, my Creator ... He's here ... in this room! He is watching right now! Powerful!

What must He think of what I'm doing; what I'm feeling and what I'm thinking? He knows my thoughts wander. He knows I am fearful to be completely transparent with One who knows me through and through. How silly! He knows that! He appeared! He actually stepped out of the secret place! If He **did** that, I would crumble. If He actually **showed up** and stepped out of the secret place into full vision, I know I would crumble and I would not be able to face Him. He knows that I *long* to *see* Him, but shudder to think what it would be like to do so.

“Prayer” here is a word from “proskuneo” meaning to supplement. It is two words: “pros” (προς) means “toward” and “euchomai” (ευχομαι) meaning “to wish”. In the New Testament, prayer is always directed toward God.

In **Matthew 14:23** is an excellent example of Jesus going up into the mountains by Himself, “After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.” The word “by Himself” means “pertaining to self”. It is “private” or “separate”. In **Matthew 14:13** he says, “When Jesus heard about John, *He withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place by Himself*”. In **Matthew 17:1** we read, “Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and his brother John, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.” This is the Mount of Transfiguration. In **Matthew 17:19** says, “Then the disciples came to Jesus **privately** to ask Him a question.” This is all the idea of doing something in secret.

In **Acts 23:19** the commander spoke to the young man privately. “The commander took him by the hand, and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately...” In **Galatians 2:2** Paul met with the other Apostles privately. In the matter of prayer Jesus recognizes the private nature of this practice.

*Public prayer must grow out of private prayer* otherwise a person might be just doing it for show. If we engage in the practice of prayer personally, privately, out of sight, in the closet, and do so sincerely and earnestly we solidify our authenticity; our realness.

*Private prayer is not merely training for public prayer* like ‘practicing it’ somehow. *It is where relationship is built. Intimacy with God is forged in secret. Alone time with God is essential, but what occurs in the alone time is also essential.* He says, “When you have shut your door.” Of course, this is merely a physical act but it is symbolic of *closing off the world, the distractions, the influences, the intrusive interruptions in order to be able to think, to meditate, to listen, and to pray. There needs to be quietness.*

I have been reading again Foster’s book on prayer. It’s a challenging book to point to the different purposes and practices of prayer. Unless we deliberately focus on these various kinds of communications with God, we will tend to miss some important aspects of our relationship with Him. For many, private places are very difficult, especially for those with young children who need supervision. You don’t have the luxury of just leaving them alone. But an ordered life and a peace and growth needs the secret place.

Since Jesus taught and practiced the ‘secret place’ what does this tell us about His mind, the way He thinks? *Jesus needed intimacy and focused time with His Father.* What exactly happened to Jesus during these times? He was God. He knew everything about everything unless He emptied Himself of this. Remember from time eternal, the Father, Jesus the Son, along with the Holy Spirit had dwelt in complete unity; a relationship which formed the core model for all relationships. There were no common ‘human barriers’ this Godhead.

But now, Jesus has flesh, and all of that goes with this. Jesus was distractible and able to be tempted! He needed focus for His task that He was sent to do. *There was too much at stake to fail.* He had to prepare Himself frequently which included the secret place.

What exchange took place in Jesus' secret place? What did Jesus do? What did the Father do? We know Jesus prayed, sometimes all night. In His pouring out His heart to His Father who completely understood, completely cared, and who completely had the power and the wisdom to respond appropriately in accordance with His divine character, His will and His pleasure; with all of this true of the Father, why would we not want to spend secret time with Him? We, as people, try to get close to those in high places or places of influence but *we have complete access now to the most powerful person in the Universe!*

*Jesus, in the secret place was a picture of both absolute strength and absolute weakness in a place, in a moment. A theme of the Sermon on the Mount is dependence. The secret place is a place of dependence.* Jesus modeled His dependence on the Father. We may never know the full extent of the exchange in the secret place, but we can go there freely and wait to see what the Father brings into that place for us! We show up, and we open ourselves to Him. We make ourselves receptive and expect Him to supply our needs. He knew what we needed before we even asked. He knows the secret place is an appointment.

In prayer, Jesus forbids *meaningless repetition* which the Gentiles use. They do so toward their dead idols. **1 Kings 18** is the story of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal. These prophets raved in prayer to a god who could give no response, even cutting themselves for a full day. Verse 29 says, "but there was no voice. No one answered. No one paid attention." Elijah's short prayer, only two verses, is recorded. In Elijah's prayer he acknowledges God as the God of Israel; acknowledged His place as a servant simply carrying out the will of God; a simple plea for God to answer and the motive that the people would know Yahweh is God and that it is God who turns their hearts back again in **1 Kings 18:36-37**.

"Meaningless repetition" is a word that comes from "battos". It means a proverbial stammer, to prate tediously. It means to speak foolishly, to babble, to chatter, much talk without content or no real purpose ... just a lot for show! The point, again, is making a performance or a show of prayer instead of what it was meant to be. *God desires a meaningful relationship with us.* He wants us to **nurture** this relationship in prayer. This is why I like Foster's book on prayer. It speaks of different kinds of prayer for different purposes. Often, my prayers might become stale and repetitive. Foster leads us to *experience prayer in our relationship to our multitude of needs.*

Every relationship is multi-dimensional. It is like a city. There are many roads with many experiences, but we tend to limit ourselves to 'one way' or 'just a few routes' ... repetitive experiences when there is so much more to see and to know and to do and to learn and to share. *Prayer must be real conversation between two real "persons" ... God who is the most real and me who is becoming more real daily ... because of Jesus.*

These babbling Gentiles suppose they will be heard for their many words. Presuppositions often drive religious actions. In this case, as in many cases, it is a false supposition of God Himself ... who He is and what He is like. *How a person sees God will determine how they worship God.* I don't think the Gentiles actually believe that God is hard of hearing, but *perhaps they think He is a distant or reluctant or a stingy God who doesn't turn loose of His good possessions easily.* They see God as One who must be impressed by our words and actions. Their God rewards performance even if it is meaningless performance. Their

God likes to be begged because ‘it makes him feel more powerful and more important’. The babbling makes the Gentile worshiper *appear* more spiritual and more earnest, but it is merely a game. What they do not understand, among many other things, is that God is not reluctant. **He is love. He is a father who loves to give good gifts to His children.** Jesus **knows** the Father. No suppositions, no guesses, no ‘trial and error’. Jesus not only ***knows*** God the Father but He also ***models*** the Father before men.

Did the disciples have to ‘lobby’ Jesus to get Him to listen? ***The picture we get of government, whether ancient or modern is that it’s like pulling teeth*** to get anything out of them! So we do the equivalent to babbling, jumping through the hoops, playing the game. ***If we apply this to God, then we get a skewed view of God. Who is this God we serve?***

***Jesus’ main job was to reveal the Father to us. John 14:9, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.”*** Jesus reduces the suppositions we make about God! Though not a new thought, it is interesting that ***in this verse it is revealed as to why man comes up with strange approaches to God.*** It is because **man does not know God.**

**Matthew 6:7-8** says “**And when you are praying, do not use thoughtless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**” God knows what we need before we ask Him. The logical question follows. “Why do I need to ask Him? A relationship with God should never be reduced to cold logic or mere practicality.

The Lord of Heaven and earth is **omnipotent** and **omniscient**. He could have made us deaf, blind and mute ... even more extreme than Helen Keller; unable to express ourselves, to communicate our needs or anything else; but He made us ***relational, communitive, social, interactive, expressive and responsive.***

Since God knows our needs before we ask, there are two extremes that we could go to. We could, like the Gentiles, ignore this truth and become overly expressive to the point of being obnoxious and showy; or we could simply assume that since God knows what we need, we don’t need to ask. When we don’t receive because we don’t ask, (**James 4:2**) we **assume** that God doesn’t care; that He’s not loving, or that He’s just impotent to respond ... He’s just not powerful. But James teaches us that even when we ask, we must do so with right motives and in faith without doubting (**James 1:5**).

Prayer is relational and faith-based. It is meant for more than simple communication. There is value in our thinking about our needs and getting below the surface of those ‘felt needs’ to the ‘deeper needs’ of the heart. He knows ***exactly*** what we need ... but do ***we***? Needs are complicated things.

We are often so child-like, concrete in our thinking that we only ask for food and water instead of the softer needs ... the ***emotional*** and the ***spiritual*** needs that we have. By articulating our needs to God we learn something about ourselves. But Jesus is making sure we know ***the Father***. He’s ***not*** distant. He’s ***not*** deaf. He is tuned in to us and He understands us. Jesus will ‘flesh this out’ later in chapter 6 and give us an anecdote to worry ... which is a prayer to a false god.

The prayer Jesus gave us is a concise insight into the mind of Christ ... “pray then this way”. It is as though He, the master, takes us by the hand and leads us into deeper waters of prayer; into the needs that really matter.

Needs expressed are dependent on the One we express the needs to. The Source is important. We don't go to the Social Security office to get ice cream. And if we want ice cream, we have to go to an ice cream parlor. So before Jesus walks us through a pool of needs, He first identifies the One who can supply these deepest needs.

This is where we're going to end today because this takes us into the prayer itself that Jesus taught on this occasion. We will spend some time, a lot of time, in that prayer taking apart the various aspects of that prayer.

*All that we did today was preparation* for that. It was how Jesus prepared us to begin to learn how to pray.

Thank you for joining us today. I'm glad that you were part of our study of the Mind of Christ. We invite you to go to our website at <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> where you'll find other material there that you can take advantage of.

God bless you and have a great week.