



SERIES: Walking with Jesus
SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD
Tuesday, November 28, 2023
Scripture: Matthew 6:5-8
TITLE: Don't Pray This Way

At a recent Husker game, I witnessed a disturbing sight. A couple was having a fight. One person was yelling at the top of their lungs, I assume, to make a point while bringing attention to the situation. I have no idea what the nature of the problem was. But I can safely assume there was a more effective and private way of communicating.

You know, at times, we communicate with God in some pretty ineffective ways too. What do I mean by that? Let's continuing walk with Jesus in Matthew 6:5-8 (CSB). Jesus has some convicting words about prayer.

“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.”

Jesus says, when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. Hypocrites imply an actor in a play who wore a mask. It was a stage show, and that's all it was for these religious phonies. They would go out and pray on the public corner hoping everyone would see.

Jesus isn't condemning public prayer. Praying in public, in a church, on the corner, in the airport, or wherever is not the issue. The issue is pride. It's for recognition and applause from the witnesses. It's much like what Jesus shared yesterday about giving. Motives matter. That's why He says, go pray in a closet. It forces us to be focused on Him and not on who is watching.

But then He gives, perhaps, an even more convicting statement on prayer in verses 7 and 8. He says don't babble on like the Gentiles. What does that mean? He is saying don't say words just to say them. Don't say empty words. Don't pontificate to God. He's not impressed. Don't give the ol' “rub a dub-dub thanks for the grub.” That's babble.

Just talk to God. Speak to Him like anyone else. I mean, if I tried talking to my kids like I often talk to God, they'd think I'm clueless and a robot. God wants us to talk with Him for His glory. He wants us to spend quality time with Him. He wants quality and not quantity. He wants intimacy, not obligation. Prayer with God is meant to be intimate and sincere.

So here's my challenge for today:

Talk with God. It may not be natural at first. Most conversations are not. But they become natural and meaningful as time progresses. But you have to start somewhere. So begin today by talking to God bit by bit through each conversation.

So connect with God today. This is one relationship you will never regret.