Matthew chapter 6.
Matthew chapter 6.
Amen.
Amen, what a truth in this song.
Church, I'm not smart enough to figure out what I'm doing or where I'm going.
We're fixing to go on a little bit of a journey.
I don't know how long it'll be.
It may just be a few services.
It may be a few weeks.
We're just going to go on a journey
until God tells us it's time
to switch gears and go on a different one.
I'm going to speak to this for a little while
or Jesus is going to speak to us for a little while
on this subject of how to pray.
I told the church Wednesday night
I'm a little nervous,
a little hesitant
to go down this direction, not because the subject is
delicate or controversial, but because it's so familiar.
We all know how to pray.
We all know how to pray.
We all think we know how to pray.
We've got prayer figured out.
But it fits so well with that song that was just saying.
We're talking about God.
And tonight, this morning, I want to share
with us on the thought of the first priority
in prayer.
Matthew chapter 6, verse number 9.
Jesus says, after this manner,
therefore, pray ye.
Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
And that's more than enough
for one service today.
After this manner,
therefore, pray ye.
Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Let's pray.
Dear Father, I thank you
for that you not only
purposed my existence,
you gave me life.

But you sustain it and you hold it.
Dear God, our greatest need today,
Lord, it isn't to see
ourselves.
It really isn't to see
the world in which we live.
It is to see the greatness of our God, which is in heaven.
Lord, I pray today
that you would enable me to share your word in a manner that is pleasing unto you.
Lord, with a clean heart and fresh eyes,
God, that you might reveal yourself
to New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church.
Lord, that you might call the ones who don't know you,
that they would see the great love that was shed on the cross
for them.
Lord, for your church and for your saints,
that you would strengthen us and change us and mold us
and keep us by your power.
Lord, in Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.
And amen.
That's Wednesday night.
We finally wrapped up
after two months
our journey through the book of Ephesians.
And Paul ended that letter,
that armor of God with a call to prayer.
He says, praying always
with all prayer
and supplication and the spirit
watching thereunto
the perseverance
of the saints.
Praying all the time.
Not just when things are bad, not just when we got an emergency,
but it is the pattern of our life.
And not just going to God when we need something,
but we go to God just to say thank you.
Thank you, Lord,
for your blessings upon me.
Thank you for my family.
Thank you for my wife.
Thank you for my children.
But most of all, thank you for loving me and the salvation
that you've given me.
That we go to God
in intercessory prayer.

Lord, today it's not about me.
It's about somebody else.
Praying in the spirit.
Not to be heard.
Not to check something off our to-do list.
But that the spirit of God
translates the groanings in our heart when we don't even know what to say.
But the spirit of God within us.
Paul says pray, pray, pray.
Ephesians were told why to pray.
But Jesus tells us
how to pray.
There's a question that I've been asked numerous times.
And to be honest, there's times that I've even asked myself this question.
If God knows all things,
if God is omnipotent,
if there's not any surprises with him,
there's nothing that we can inform him of,
if God truly knows all things, and it's not an if,
God does know all things,
if God can do all things, if there's nothing impossible for him,
nothing too hard,
God knows all things, if God can do all things,
and this great God has already promised
to meet all of my needs to the riches of his son,
which he has,
then why do I need to pray?
Does that make sense?
God knows all things.
God can do all things.
God has promised to meet every need in my life,
not every want, not every wish, not every desire,
but God has promised to meet every need that I have in my life,
then why pray?
Folks, there's a lot, a lot of answers to that question.
I gave my computer, my laptop a virus Wednesday night, I went home from church
and started Googling quotes and thoughts on prayers and went all over the place,
and I didn't even write any of those down, but I'm going to tell you,
there's a truth that the Lord
impressed upon me,
and this is one of the whys that we need to pray.
Folks,
the purpose of prayer
is not to change God.
The purpose of prayer
is to change us.
It's not to change God.

The purpose of prayer
is to change us.
And this morning, I want to share with us on this thought
of the first priority in prayer.
What is a priority?
It's something that is necessary,
it's something that is important,
and it's something that has to be there,
but there's many priorities that we have in life, but we're talking about
going before God in prayer,
and what are these priorities that I have,
that there has to be one,
something's got to be first.
That the first priority in prayer,
what is that?
What should it be?
You can answer some of these questions this morning.
What is the great commandment?
Jesus was asked,
a young lawyer come to him, he says, of all the
commandments that we have, I'm paraphrasing,
what is the greatest commandment?
Anybody know that?
Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all
thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength.
That's the greatest of all the commandments,
is God says,
you are to love me with everything that is within you.
What is the first of the Ten Commandments?
Sir?
Of the Ten Commandments, first of the Ten Commandments.
Thou shall have no other God before me.
Great commandment,
you're to love me above all else.
In other words, I'm to be first in regards to love.
First of the Ten Commandments, I'm to be first in regards to worship.
Not just first, I'm the only one
that you can worship.
Folks,
these things aren't random,
they're not chance, they're not luck.
What God is doing,
He is setting a divine precedence.
That because of who He is,
He is to be loved above all things.
Because He is who He is,
He is to be worshipped above all things.

And what is true in the great commandment, what is true with the Ten Commandments,
is also true
when it comes to prayer.
Church,
the first priority in prayer
is that we must recognize
the majesty,
the glory,
the authority.
We must recognize
the hallowedness
of God.
Look what Jesus says here.
And this is a template.
This isn't something to memorize.
It's not something we recite or just mindlessly or just mindlessly say.
Jesus is saying,
this is how you pray.
In this manner,
in this way,
after this manner,
therefore pray ye,
our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
The word hallowed's big.
It means to be magnified.
It means to be sanctified.
It means to be made large.
That's what it means to magnify something.
You look at a sail or something in a magnoscope,
you're taking this small thing
and you're making it big.
But God is saying, my name is to be set apart.
It is to be sanctified.
It is to be seen that is He is, which is a name that is large.
It means to be holy.
It means to be a name that is treated
with honor.
Now this doesn't mean that we can fully explain God.
This doesn't mean that we truly comprehend God.
What God is saying is that through faith,
the man who prays in this manner, the man who prays,
whose prayer is going to be heard,
is a man that recognizes
the majesty,
the glory,

the authority,
the hallowedness of who I am.
It's a man who sees the God of Job where Job says,
in His hands He holds the soul
of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.
Man, that verse has been all over me.
We're talking about how big God is
that in His hand
He holds all of life.
My life, your life,
breath in His hand.
That when we kneel down to pray,
that we see the greatness of this God, the bigness of this God,
the God who showed up and showed out in Egypt.
God sent Moses to Pharaoh,
let my people go, and y'all know that whole story and that whole scene.
So God, one after another, one after another,
water in the blood,
the frogs,
the darkness,
the lies, all of these things.
God is showing
that there is none
it can even compare to who I am.
The God who showed up at the Red Sea,
part of the sea,
so,
and two million people could walk through,
but at the same sea that He
crashed down upon an army.
The same God who showed up on Mount Sinai
at thunder and smoke.
Folks,
this is the God that we're talking about.
It is the only God,
Brittany, that can hold you fast.
This great God come down and the entire thing began to shake and smoke and fire
and the people were so amazed and so and all.
It said,
don't let that God even speak to us lest we die.
It's the absolute
hallowingness
of who God is.
It's the God
that filled the temple
in 2 Chronicles chapter 17,
one of my favorite scenes in all of Scripture

that the Lord had put on Solomon's heart to build this temple
and Solomon stands up
and he prays.
This was the most beautiful building I believe that had ever been constructed
but he knew if God didn't fill it it was all for vain.
God come down
and God come down and he burned up to sacrifice
and it says the glory of the Lord filled the house.
In other words he filled up every corner so much so that the people couldn't enter
so much so that they went out and they killed 120,000 oxen.
I'm talking about
this hollowed sacred mighty big huge God.
God says
the first priority in prayer is that you recognize who I am.
God's so big.
I love Isaiah's vision.
Isaiah chapter 6
in the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord
high and lifted up and his glory filled the place
and there's an angel there and I love this scene.
The angel has six wings.
Two wings he's flying.
Two he covers his feet
and the other two he covers his eyes.
He couldn't look at this God.
Big God.
Folks I'm convinced that it is impossible for me to preach him big enough
it's impossible for me to preach him bright enough but if we're going to get
prayer right if we're going to get church right if we're
going to get life right we must get this God right.
You see getting him wrong
doesn't just affect our prayer life
it affects our whole life.
This is about prayer but it's about so much more than prayer.
I never heard this man preach but I've read after him an old man by the name of A.W.
Tozer.
That old man was wise.
I'm convinced the older people who's already gone
are a whole lot smarter than this new young people.
He wrote this book The Knowledge of the Holy
said that the first step down for any church or man
is when they surrender to their high view of God.
Think about that for just a minute.
That the first step away
the first step down I'm on this platform today and I'm standing taller than
anybody else but the first step down for me is when
I begin to think about less of God than he truly is.

He also said there is no spiritual
failure or fear that isn't somehow tied to an insufficient
view of God.
This is how important it is.
We're talking about prayer,
connecting with God and if I'm going to connect with God I must approach,
recognize and see who this God is.
And folks I'm convinced
just from my own
life and from what I observe
the reason our prayers are so shallow
and oftentimes our lives are so shallow
is because our view of God
is so shallow.
And folks that's just not my opinion
that is a very testimony of God.
Tell me if you would to the book of Psalms
chapter 50 I want to read a passage to you.
Psalms chapter number 50.
Look at verse number 16.
Psalms chapter 50
verse 16.
It says but unto the wicked God saith
what hast thou to do to declare my statutes so that thou shouldest take my covenant
in thy mouth seeing thou hatest instructions and castest my words behind thee.
When thou sawest a thief thou contendest with
him and hath been partakers with adulteries.
Thou givest thy mouth to evil and thy tongue frameth deceit.
Thou sinnedest and speakest against thy brother.
Thou slanderst thine own mother's son.
But look at verse number 21.
He says these things hast thou done and I kept silence.
Here's the greatest mistake.
Look what God says.
Thou
thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.
But I will approve thee and set them in order before thine eyes.
Now consider this ye that forget God lest I
tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.
You say what was their problem?
Here was their problem.
It wasn't just the things that they did.
It's what happened in their mind to let them to do the things that they did.
They took God off of his throne and said God is really no different than us.
He said you
think I'm like you.
That's what God said.

You think I'm okay.
You have taken me and you have made me small.
It is because you have made me small.
It has led to these actions in your life.
Listen,
this is about prayer.
It's about prayer.
But it's about so much more than that.
If we're going to pray to God and God is going to hear us,
brother, we're going to have to recognize who we're talking to,
who he is.
But it's not just about prayer.
We can look and see the truth of that.
That the first step down for any church or man is
when they surrender this high view of who the Lord is.
But folks, it's not just the negative side.
There's such a great positive side to this.
I love,
listen,
I'm not scared,
I want to learn.
By the way,
we ought to be learners for a lifetime.
For a lifetime.
It scares me now.
I'm 54
years old,
and what I thought it knew,
I knew at 44,
and I didn't know a thing, what I thought I knew at 34,
and I really didn't know a thing,
and at 24,
all men just need to be locked up in a cage somewhere because we don't know anything.
Well, we ought to be learners
for a lifetime.
It's good to go and read Psalm 50 and go,
Randy,
here's how they ended up where they did because they
took this great God of Solomon's temple and Sinai and go, ah,
he's not that big at all.
He's just like us.
He's a God of a culture.
We can learn from those mistakes,
but we can also learn from the positive.
Now, you tell me how in the world Abraham could proceed to go
and offer his son that God gave him and Sarah when they was 100 years old.
How in the world could that man get up early in the morning,

take his son and the wood and head up that mountain,
pull a knife and proceed to sacrifice his son?
How in the world could Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
refuse to bow when they knew,
they knew,
they knew, they knew that the fiery
furnace was going to be therein.
How in the world could Joshua and Caleb,
just two men,
stand up against that whole murmuring crowd and go, you know what,
we'll go and fight those giants.
How in the world did they do that?
It had nothing to do with the size of the men.
It had everything to do with the size of their God.
They had a great big God
and because they had a great big God,
they were able to do great big things.
It's that simple.
When this God is reduced and this God is small,
our lives are reduced and our lives are small and our faith is small
and we're shaken and we're disturbed
and we're not making more of God than he is.
I can't make him as big as he is, sister Sherry,
but when I begin to see him as he is,
that's when it begins to transform everything in my life,
my love,
my obedience,
my worship,
my submission,
all of these things,
my faith.
That's how they accomplished it.
But Jesus here,
he had showed how not to pray.
Not to pray.
to be seen and heard of men,
blah, blah, blah, blah,
blah.
It's a waste of breath.
It is a waste of time.
He says, after this manner, therefore,
pray you,
our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed
be thy name.
Holy

is your name.
Majestic
is your name.
Large
is your name.
Beautiful
is your name.
Listen,
we need to be,
folks, when we kneel down to pray,
we need to be eerily,
eerily aware
that we
are entering
into the presence of the holy of holies and an omniscient,
umknowing,
all-powerful,
mighty God.
I told my wife this morning,
I'm telling you, it's just come on me Wednesday
night, but my last three days have been different.
This ain't preacher speak.
Now, I ain't gonna lie to you.
My last three days have been different.
You say, well, what happened?
God looks different.
God looks different.
Well, did God change?
No.
God didn't change.
I'm just kind of
beginning to seem a little bigger as he is.
before I sit down and pray,
I think about what I'm getting to do.
See, we take this thing to,
God help me with this lesson.
We just don't stroll
up into the presence of the, you know that in the
holies, a man can only come in there once a year,
and that's after he washed himself and cleaned himself.
He was coming into the presence of God.
It was a big, big deal,
friend, when we get to pray,
I'm stepping
into the presence of the great I am.
And this God's
amazing,

and he's huge, and he's large.
It'll change the way you pray,
but it'll change the way you live when your God is as big as the God of the Bible.
Jesus says this is the first priority in prayer,
that we recognize the greatness,
the majesty,
and the hallowedness of God.
But that's only part of this verse.
Number two,
friend, if you've been adopted by grace, this
great God
is your father.
That went right over our heads.
If you
have been adopted by grace,
this great God with all the power that I have just described,
this great God with all the might that we see in God's word, this
great God
is your father.
Now, I got to use the word if right here for just a second.
Because contrary to popular opinion,
God is not, I hope you're recording,
God is not every man's father.
God is every man's maker, God is every man's
creator, and God is every man's sustainer.
But Jesus looked at those unbelieving Jews, he said, your father is the devil.
So here's what we've got to nail down.
Listen, before we start talking about how to pray,
we've got to understand if we've got a right to pray.
Is God your father?
I mean, have you repented
and believed in the work of the son?
Haley, if you cast your life down at the feet of the kings of kings, if you turn from
your sin and turn to him in faith,
and we've taken all that we have and all that we are,
and we put our faith in the work of God's lamb,
have you been adopted by the grace of God and been made new?
Are you an heir,
a child of the living king?
If you're not, then you have no right to pray,
and your prayers
are not being heard.
That's the Bible.
Heard somebody say anybody can pray.
Yeah,
anybody can pray, but just can't anybody hear,
get heard.

I see this,
and it saddens me.
Something happens.
I want to say this the right way.
When non-believers,
people outside of the will of God ask for prayer, that's a great thing.
But I also see it,
and they're asking for prayer, and they're praying,
and they're praying, and they're praying.
All you want is help.
You don't want God.
All you want is relief from your temporary pain.
You don't want God.
All you want is to be made more comfortable in this life in which we live,
which is contrary to the will of God.
And can I tell you, God does not hear those prayers.
But,
praise God,
if you've been adopted by grace,
if you're a child of God,
this great God is our Father,
not a stranger,
not a force,
not a religion,
not a relic,
not a denomination.
He is a loving Father.
We see it from the very beginning with Adam and Eve,
this great Father who went out and pursued
and provided for his fallen children in the wilderness.
It's the love of a father.
Now, this is hard for some of us to understand.
I had a good dad.
Many of you had a good dad.
Some of you had poor dads.
But none of us have ever had a perfect father.
None of us have had a perfect father.
But in God, we've got a perfect father.
You say, what is this father like?
In the book of Hebrews,
he invites his own children to come boldly before his throne.
This is a father.
When his children fell,
he went out searching for them and he provided and he pursued.
He invites them to come now before the throne of grace
that they might find strength and help in time of need.
Now, he's too big for us to comprehend.

He's too holy for our eyes to fully see.
Yet he is approachable and he is knowable.
Folks,
Brother Donnie,
this is the same God that knit you together in your mama's womb.
He holds the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind in his hand,
yet he has
every hair on my head numbered.
He's a father.
The book of James says he's the giver of every good
and perfect gift.
Jesus says, you being even know how you give gifts unto your children.
How much more are you father in heaven?
If you ask for bread, he won't give you a stone.
If you ask for fish, he won't give you a snake.
If you ask for an egg, he won't give you a scorpion.
No, it's this father who heard the cries of his children in Egypt.
He heard the cries of Hagar's child.
And can I tell you, child of God,
if you're
cries,
he's the same father who walked with David to the valley of the shadow of death.
And he promised to walk with us, to go and to be with us and to walk with us.
This great God, we're talking about prayer.
And the God of all this might and majesty and glory and honor,
too holy to be seen and too holy to approach,
the scripture says
that he is my father.
Another quote by A.W.
I told you this stuff with me for years.
It says what comes into our minds, I want you to think about this,
what comes into our minds when we think about God
is the most important thing about us.
Preacher, what does that mean?
Because brother Lord,
what comes to your mind when you think about God
by default
translates
and affects every other area of our life.
Christian.
Do you know what the scripture says in the book of Romans?
He said, for you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear,
but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby
we
cry Abba Father.
And that's such a wonderful word, that word Abba.
It is a little word that means daddy.

He says, listen, here's what's happened to you in the book of Ephesians.
You were far away,
you were dead,
but God gave the gift of grace and faith.
He chose you before the foundation of the world.
He put all of these things in motion.
He has saved you, he has sealed you,
he has sanctified you,
he's made you a new workmanship.
Why?
That you may stand, haven't done it all to stand,
because you fight against not flesh and blood,
but against spiritualities and powers and all
of these things, wickedness and high places.
But stand,
stand,
stand.
Put on that whole armor of God,
pray,
pray,
pray,
but know this, Joel,
you've been adopted,
and this great God of heaven, I can nestle up close to him like he's my daddy.
Brother Brian, that sounds almost irreligious.
I'm not talking about irreligious,
because I recognize his hallowedness,
but I also recognize his intimacy.
I just try to think about things sometimes.
In a way, my dad,
I quickly outgrew him
as a man,
but I remember when I was a child,
he worked the night shift,
the railroad.
I had an example of a meek, hard-working daddy.
It didn't matter if it was rain
and thunderstorms or 20
degrees, my daddy went to work every night.
Two nights a week, though,
daddy was home.
You know why I slept most of the time?
By the way, the older we get, our houses that we
grew up in, they don't get bigger, they get smaller.
My mom and dad had this room,
and I thought it was the biggest bed and the
biggest room, it's really just a little double bed,

and it takes up nearly the whole room.
And by the end of my dad's bed in the wall, there's a spot about this big.
And when my dad got home,
I would let him get laid down.
I went and got the blanket out of the closet and the pillow,
and Brother Blind slept right here.
See,
there was nobody bigger than this man.
There was nobody stronger than this man.
There was nobody better than this man.
But he was my dad.
And I could get just as close as I wanted to.
Child of God,
God is your
daddy.
He's your father.
And he is the same
father that spoke this entire universe in existence.
He can do all things.
Nothing's too hard for him.
He's holy.
He's hallowed.
He's huge.
He holds everything.
But I got the privilege.
Jesus says, here's how you pray, son.
You say, my father which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Now you recognize him for his greatness and his goodness, but you nestle up to
him, you flee to him, that he may hold you fast.
You come to him because you got a right to ask of him.
Because he's adopted you and accepted and he
keeps you and that's how you begin to pray.
That is the first priority
in prayer.
Church, we must see
the privilege in prayer.
We must see the power of prayer.
But we've got to recognize the priorities in prayer.
The why to,
the why to,
Christian life ain't a playground,
it's a battleground.
We need to pray.
The how to, by the way,
there is a how to.
There's a right way and the wrong way.

And the right way ain't my way, the right way is God's way.
But Matthew, I have just been, my soul is filled
because of the who to.
tell me the who to.
My father, which ought to have it.
Holy is your name.
Listen,
it will absolutely affect your prayer life, but even more important,
it will affect your entire life.
it will affect our church life.
It will affect our married life.
The purpose of prayer isn't to change God,
it's to change us,
that we might be that workmanship
that brings glory and honor to him.
Brother Alton, if you'll come,
if you don't know God as your father,
I'm not being mean, I'm just being truthful.
Every prayer you've ever prayed ain't got above the ceiling.
But this great God
will adopt you,
he'll save you,
he'll cleanse you,
but you must recognize your need for him.
You must confess your sins before him,
and this great God will make you his own.
Let's pray.
Heavenly Father,
help us.
God, not just help us to pray,
but help us to see you as you are.
Lord, not as preachers have said you are, not as we've told ourselves who you are,
not as culture has painted us who you are,
but as you have revealed yourself in your word,
a God that is pure and clean and right and mighty and just,
powerful,
but gracious and strong.
But dear God, you love me as your son because I am.
Lord, I pray
that there's one of your children who feels estranged,
that this morning that they would
kneel
before the throne of their loving father.
In Jesus'
name I pray.
Amen.