

Catechetical Sermon, June 1st, 2025

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 46 "Prayer"

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 6:1-15

Lesson Aim	To understand three things: First, the kind of prayer God is not pleased with, second, the kind of prayer God is pleased with and third, how God is in heaven where he has the power and authority to help us.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 46 and Matthew 6:1-15 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What kind of prayers is God not pleased with?</p> <p>God is not pleased with prayers that are not respectful of his holiness and majesty. For instance, people can address God with overly familiar terms or with prayers that are filled with meaningless repetition. The words with which we address God should be appropriate to the One from whom all things come. In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus rebukes those who make their prayers to God as opportunities to promote themselves and not the glory of the Triune God.</p> <p>What kind of prayers is God pleased with?</p> <p>God is pleased with prayers that use the words he has given us to use such as the words found in the Lord's Prayer (take this opportunity to recite this prayer together as a family). As Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 120 says, when we address God as our Father at the beginning of our prayer, we are encouraged to have a childlike reverence for and trust in God understanding that God will certainly grant us our requests. Also, we are to think about the fact that we are united to Christ through faith and the Holy Spirit. Because we have this union with Christ, we are reconciled to God and enjoy fellowship with him, which gives us a boldness in our prayers such that we can be assured that God will answer our prayers.</p> <p>What difference does it make to believe that God is in heaven where he has the power and authority to help us?</p> <p>The fact that God is in heaven helps us to understand that he resides in the highest position of power and authority; there is no one greater or more powerful. God is present with us wherever we go because he has given us his Spirit. Yet, at the same time, he is a God far off filling heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:23-24). God's power and ability is his greatness, which is unsearchable (Psalm 145:3). Since our God is this powerful, he will always answer our prayers in a way that perfectly suits our true needs.</p>
Bible Reading	Romans 8-14 (Reading through the New Testament)