

HEAVEN ON EARTH

SERIES: TEACH US TO PRAY



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Matthew 6:10

Second Message

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Matthew 6:9-10

Good morning! My name is Dan, and I am one of the pastors here at PBC.

I had one of those moments a while back—maybe you’ve had one of these moments as well—where all of here sudden, I realized that something was not quite right. I had just gotten a new grill and was using it for one of the first times to grill up some chicken for our community group. It’s a wood pellet grill, so it puts off some smoke while it cooks—that’s kind of the point. At one point, as the chicken is cooking, my wife Linzy says, “The grill looks like it’s smoking a lot.” I assured her it was fine. And it was. After the chicken finished, I took off the meat and heated the grill even more to burn off the grease. A few minutes later, one of the kids says, “Look at all that smoke!” I looked, and it really was a lot of smoke. I opened up the grill to find the entire thing filled with fire. Hmmm, that doesn’t seem quite right. I wouldn’t have been too worried, but the grill was just a foot from our fence, and I really didn’t want the fence to catch on fire. In a mild panic, I ran to get our fire extinguisher. Thankfully, by the time I got back to the grill, the flames were dying down and soon went out. Whew!

When was the last time that you had one of those moments? Not necessarily one of the moments where you almost burn your fence down in a grease fire, but one of those moments where you realize that something is not quite right. Or maybe it’s worse than that. Maybe you realize that things are terribly wrong.

You don’t have to be very in touch with reality to recognize that many, many things in our world are not quite right. And many, many more things are terribly wrong. We can’t help but think this when we see photos of people hanging from airplanes while they take off from the airport in Kabul as they flee from the Taliban. We can’t help but think this when we hear about the more than 2,000 people who died in the earthquake in Haiti last weekend. We can’t help but think that as we are a year and a half into this pandemic. You don’t have to pay close attention to realize that things in this world are not as they should be. All of that is without even

looking into our own hearts and own lives to see how messed up things are there!

It’s interesting to watch how various people respond to the realization that this world is broken. Some people see it as a challenge to overcome—a bug to be fixed—and they quickly get to work to devise a solution. Others are driven to despair; they lose hope and become filled with anxiety and dread.

But Jesus would have us take another path. Instead of jumping into fix-it mode or giving in to despair, do you know what Jesus would have us do? Get on our knees in prayer. And the prayer that Jesus would have us pray when faced with the brokenness in our world goes like this: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is a prayer, as we will see together this morning, in which we express our desire to see heaven come to earth. This is a prayer in which we ask God to fix all that is wrong with our broken world and our broken hearts. This is a prayer in which we entrust ourselves and our world to our loving Father who is in heaven.

These words are given to us in The Lord’s Prayer. Last week, we started a four-week series on the incredibly powerful and profound prayer that Jesus gives to his disciples and to us, to teach us to pray. Last week we looked at the first two lines of the prayer. This week, we will look at the next two lines, found in Matthew 6:10.

As we begin, I want to remind you of the challenge that I gave you last week, which is to pray The Lord’s Prayer every day for the four weeks of this series. Make this a part of your daily routine, either in the morning or evening, to orient your heart towards the Lord.

Please stand with me, as you are able, and let’s pray The Lord’s Prayer together.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

The kingdom of God

We are looking at the second two lines in this prayer, which come to us in Matthew 6:10.

By way of reminder, this prayer is comprised of an address to God (Our Father in heaven), followed by a series of six petitions or requests. The first three requests are vertical; the second three requests are horizontal. Last week, we looked at the first of the vertical requests: Hallowed by your name. This week, we will look at the next two vertical requests. The final three requests are all oriented towards our needs: give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, and lead us not into temptation.

With that in mind, let's take a look at Matthew 6:10, where we find the second and third petition of The Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:10:

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

This verse includes two separate petitions: "Your kingdom come." And "your will be done" While these two requests may have slightly different nuances, they are actually getting at the same thing. In fact, in Luke's version (Luke 11:2-4), Jesus only gives five petitions instead of six. It is the third one ("your will be done") that he excludes—probably because it is essentially a restatement or elaboration of "Your kingdom come."

That these two petitions are essentially the same request becomes apparent when we understand what the kingdom of God really is.

Jesus talked about the kingdom of God all the time, but we often don't have a good idea of what the kingdom of God really is. It's a bit of an ambiguous concept for many of us, likely because most of us did not grow up

in a place where we had a king or a queen, unlike our neighbors across the pond. If you don't have a king or queen, it is hard to understand Jesus' metaphor here. But let's try.

Maybe the Disney movie *Frozen* will help. Anna and Elsa, Olaf the talking snowman, and the song "Let It Go." The story takes place in the kingdom of Arendelle, where Anna and Elsa are princesses. When their parents die, Elsa becomes the queen—the one in charge of the kingdom. Here is what's important: the one in charge of the kingdom is the one who determines what happens in the kingdom. The problem in *Frozen* is that Elsa doesn't know how to control her icy powers, and she unintentionally traps her kingdom in an eternal winter. The point is, she is the one with the power to determine what happens in her kingdom.

Now, let's think about the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God, God is the King. He is the one in charge. But his kingdom is not a kingdom with physical boundaries. It is not a specific place with geographic boundaries. Rather, God's kingdom is the area over which God is in charge. Or, more specifically (since we know that God is in charge of all places, at all times, in all of creation), we could say that the kingdom of God is the sphere in which what God wants to happen actually happens.

Dallas Willard defines the kingdom in this way: "The kingdom of God," he says, "is the range of God's effective will."¹ The range of God's effective will. That's fancy philosopher talk for saying that the kingdom of God includes any place, material or immaterial, where what God wants to happen actually happens, where God's desires become a reality.

This is happening right now in heaven. In heaven, as we speak, everything is exactly the way that God wants it to be. Heaven is full of love, joy, and peace. It's full of righteousness, justice, and truth. It is full of angels and saints who are worshipping God with every fiber of their being. Everything that God wants to happen in heaven is happening there right now.

When we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we are asking that heaven would come to earth. We are asking that earth would begin to look like heaven. We are asking that just as everything in heaven is exactly the way God wants it to be, so too everything on earth would be just the way God wants it to be. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Just before the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 4:17, Jesus says, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In that statement, Jesus was announcing that he was bringing heaven to earth. He was bringing heaven to earth so that things here would happen the way that God wants them to happen.

Jesus only brought the kingdom in part. He only brought the rule of God to earth in part. When Jesus came to earth, he brought with him love, joy and peace. He brought with him righteousness, justice, and truth, and he gave us his Spirit so that those things might become a part of us and might flow out of us.

But he did not bring the kingdom in full. He did not extend the “range of God’s effective will” to the entire world. That’s why this world still looks broken. That’s why our lives still feel broken.

Though Jesus didn’t bring the kingdom in full, he did give us a prayer to pray in the midst of the brokenness: Your kingdom come. “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

May I develop the character of Christ

When Jesus gave his disciples The Lord’s Prayer, he didn’t say, “Pray this.” He said, “Pray *like* this.” (Matthew 6:9). There is real value in praying the actual words of The Lord’s Prayer, but there is even greater value in learning from these words how to pray similar prayers that capture the heart of this prayer. In other words, this prayer is a model that teaches us how to pray similar (and more specific) prayers.

I want to give us three such prayers that we can pray—three prayers that capture the heart of these words and apply them to our lives and our world in specific ways. The first prayer is a prayer that the kingdom of God would invade my heart. The second prayer is a prayer that the kingdom of God would invade this world. The third prayer is a prayer that heaven would literally come to earth.

Here is the first prayer: “**May I develop the character of Christ.**” God, may I develop the character of Christ. This is a prayer that the kingdom of God would so penetrate my heart that my life would begin to look like the life of Jesus. It is a prayer that my heart would be ordered in the way that God wants it to be ordered—that my will would perfectly be aligned with God’s will—so that my life would look like Jesus’ life. That my words would be like his words. That my actions would be like

his actions. That my desires would look like his desires. I was driving home in traffic the other day, and I needed to turn right on El Camino Real, then turn left about half a block later. To do this, I needed to cut across three lanes of traffic and pull directly into the left lane. I saw an opening in the traffic, so I decided to go for it. The problem was that the car that I pulled out behind was going as slow as molasses, and the car that I pulled out in front of was apparently in a hurry. The car behind was a long way behind, but still, I could tell that this was going to end up a little closer than I had anticipated. When the car behind me realized this, he sped up to make a point, then honked as he drove by me. So what did I do? HOOOOONNNNKKKKKK. I laid on my horn and scared the older driver in front of me.

As soon as I did that, I thought, That was unnecessary. I should not have done that.

The problem here is not just that I unnecessarily honked my horn in frustration. The problem is that this was my first response, and I wanted to do it.

What would it look like to have the character of Christ in that situation? It would not have merely been keeping myself from honking my horn.

Developing the character of Christ is about so much more than acting a certain way. To think that the Christian life is about keeping a particular set of rules—just doing the right thing—is to fall into legalism. That’s not the gospel, and it’s not the kingdom of God. Instead, developing the character of Christ is about letting the love of God, the grace of God, the healing power of God so penetrate my heart and my soul, so transform my loves and my desires, that my will becomes aligned with God’s will. That I actually want to do the things that God wants me to do and actually begin to do those things naturally. To develop the character of Christ is to place God on the throne of my life and living my entire life as an act of worship to him.

That way, when someone does something foolish on the road, my first response is to forgive them and pray for them rather than being vindictive.

My hope is that you and I could become so much like Jesus that we want the things he wants. This is what it means for the kingdom of God to expand its reign into my heart. So we pray, “God, may I develop the character of Christ.”

May the values of heaven become the realities of earth

Not only do we want to see the kingdom of God expand its reign into our hearts, but we also want to see the kingdom of God expand its reign into our world. So, as we pray, “May I develop the character of Christ,” we should also pray a second prayer: **“May the values of heaven become the realities of earth.”**

This is a prayer that this world would begin to look like heaven. This is a prayer that the love, joy, and peace, that the righteousness, justice and truth of heaven—these great virtues that flow out of the very character of God and define every moment of life in heaven—would become realities here on earth.

There are so many places in our world where the values of heaven have not yet become realities on earth. There are so many places in our world where God’s will is not being done.

This is not an assault on God’s sovereignty. God is certainly powerful enough to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. And yet, in his sovereignty, he has chosen not to exert that power fully here on earth. Yes, God will use all things for good for those who love him and are called according to his purposes, but in this broken world he often chooses not to force his will on people.

For example, God hates racism. Racism is not a value of heaven. Justice, human dignity, self-giving love—these are the values of heaven. In heaven, no one will be abused, oppressed, looked down upon, or otherwise mistreated because of the color of their skin. And yet here, in our world (and here in Palo Alto), racism exists. Racist people exist. Racist systems exist. God has not yet brought it to an end. It is an area of this world that is outside of the kingdom of God.

When we pray, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” we are asking God to make the values of heaven the realities of earth. We are asking him to end racism, oppression, and violence and replace them with love, justice, mercy, and compassion. We are asking God to step in, to intervene. We are pleading with God to bring his healing, loving rule to earth. We are asking that the kingdom of God would so penetrate this world that slaves would be set free; pornography addicts would be healed; broken marriage would be restored; forest fires would be contained; this virus would be stopped; terminal patients would be

healed. We are asking that God would take the values of heaven and make them realities here on earth.

Come, Lord Jesus

Here is the interesting thing about this prayer. We know that it will never be fully answered in this life. Until Jesus returns, we know that the world is still broken. The kingdom of God is here in part, but it will not be here in full until Jesus comes back again. So this brings us to our third prayer: **“Come, Lord Jesus.”** At the end of the book of Revelation, after the apostle John has witnessed a remarkable vision of the new heaven and the new earth—a vision of this world fully restored by the healing, loving rule of God, a vision of Jesus on his throne lighting up the whole place with his glory—John prays these words: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

This is a prayer that heaven would literally come to earth. This is a prayer that Jesus would come back again, as he promised he would—this time not as a suffering servant but as a conquering king. These words are a prayer that Jesus would defeat Satan and evil once and for all; that he would do away with death and the grave; that he would eliminate suffering and sorrow and sin and separation from him for all of eternity.

We know this is how the story will end. Jesus will come back and he will bring the kingdom of God with him. He will bring in the new heavens and the new earth, and he will reign there forever as the King. At that time, all of creation will be a part of the kingdom of God. The “range of God’s effective will” will extend to every inch of creation so that nothing will happen that God does not desire.

That is the future that awaits us. That is the future that Jesus knew was coming. And that is the future that Jesus teaches us to pray for.

Preparing for Battle

Before we end, I have to add one final note—a disclaimer so that I might not be guilty of pastoral malpractice. Here it is: when we pray these words, we had better be ready for battle. The image of one kingdom overtaking another kingdom is a violent one. We have seen this happen in Afghanistan over the past two weeks. Every place in this world that is not currently under the rule and reign of God is under the rule and reign of Satan. And Satan does not want to give up any ground.

When we pray “Your kingdom come. Your will be done,” we are praying assault on the kingdom of Satan. We are praying assault on oppressive regimes that demean women and girls. We are praying assault on an industry that treats women as objects for men’s sexual pleasure. We are praying assault on the systems that allow millions of unborn babies to be killed every year. We are praying assault on this virus and all of its awful effects. We are praying assault on the disunity that is tearing our nation and our churches apart. We are praying assault against the kingdom of darkness that is wreaking all kinds of chaos in our world.

But we are also praying assault on our own sinful attitudes and actions. We praying assault on our own pride. Our own greed. Our own apathy. Our own lack of compassion.

When we pray this prayer, we had better be ready for life to get difficult. We had better be ready for war.

But here is the good news: we are not going to war alone. We are going to war with the one who sat in a garden knowing that he was hours away from the most painful death imaginable, knowing that he was about to bear the punishment for the sins of the whole world on his shoulders and prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus himself would pray this prayer on his way to the cross, and it was on that cross that he defeated sin and death. On the cross, he conquered the grave and opened the way to life to all who believe in him. On that cross, Jesus won the war. The battle may go on, but the war has been won.

Because of that, we can pray with confidence, Thy kingdom come. They will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. We can pray with confidence that God will answer that prayer because he proved it on the cross.

I know we all come here from all kinds of different places this morning. Some of us are wrestling with anxiety and depression. Some of us have already fought with our spouse and yelled at our kids this morning. Some of us got drunk last night to numb the pain. Some of us are filled with grief over what is happening in Afghanistan. Some of us have relatives and friends who are sick in the hospital with COVID. We are all feeling the brokenness of this world in different ways

this morning. In whatever circumstances you are facing this morning, with whatever burdens you are carrying with you right now, you have an opportunity to pray that God’s kingdom would invade that situation—that his will would be done in that specific place.

I want to invite you to complete this sentence in prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in _____ as it is in heaven.” Fill in that blank with whatever is weighing you down this morning and then we will lift these requests to the Lord in prayer.

Endnotes

1. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1st edition, 1998) 285.