

**Matthew 6:7-10a; Matt. 6:31-33 Feb. 26, 2023  
Rev. 11:15-18; Psalm 25:9**

## **The Lord's Prayer: His Kingdom and His Will**

**Holy is the Lord God Almighty and greatly to be praised. When we pray the prayer that all Christians, for all time, have prayed, we enter a relationship with our heavenly Father and we magnify His holiness in our lives. "Our Father" ... "Hallowed be thy name" ... holy be Your name in my life, in what I say and what I do today. Pray the Lord's Prayer every day, and you will approach, without conditions or demands, the awesome One worthy of worship who is also our loving Father.**

**This is the second in this series of messages on the Lord's Prayer. Again, I am indebted to Rev. Elmer Towns for the wisdom in his book *Praying the Lord's Prayer For Spiritual Breakthrough*,<sup>j</sup> and for John Wesley's reflections found in his sermon "Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount, Discourse VI," (1748).<sup>ii</sup>**

**Last week I shared that this most complete prayer consists of a preface, the petitions, and then a benediction or conclusion. I talked about the preface, "Our Father, who is in heaven..." and we considered the first petition, "Holy be your name..." Today let's consider the second and third petitions: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done..."**

### **Our Prayer With Jesus**

**When Jesus taught about prayer He told his disciples, and us, that prayer is about real communion with God. Jesus warned not to be like those who pile up words – thinking they will be heard because of their many words. Empty of your heart and bereft of reverence, your words are not genuine communion with our heavenly Father.**

**Like communion the Lord's Prayer has endured through the ages, and become integral to Christian worship, because it comes straight from Jesus Himself as He models for us how to pray. It is not the only prayer that Christians can and should pray. But it is the best for it says all we need to say to God in our prayers. When we pray "Our Father" we are praying together with Jesus, and we are transformed in ways that God has planned for our lives.**

**Notice that the Lord's Prayer can be seen as seven petitions: three are focused on heaven and pray for God's glory - these are the "Thy" petitions. Four are focused our needs on earth – the "Us" petitions. One asks for our physical needs – "our daily bread" while the others pray for our spiritual life. Taken all together the prayer unites heaven and earth.**

**In this prayer we approach God as our loving, heavenly Father – who cares for us and for our needs even before we ask. We also acknowledge that His name should be revered in a way that sets Him apart in our thinking and feeling. Our lives are meant to honor God's good name; the same way we want our own children to do us credit in their living. That is why we begin by praying, "Our Father, in heaven; may your name be holy..."**

## **The Second Petition: “Thy Kingdom Come”**

**When you pray “Thy kingdom come...” you are asking for God to bring His kingdom principles and kingdom agenda into your life. In order that God’s name be made holy, we pray that the kingdom of Christ may come. It begins with each person who repents of his/her sin and believes the gospel. *Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent,* John 17:3.**

**When you pray, “May your kingdom come...” you are inviting God to rule in your own heart by His principles, the way God rules in heaven. God rules with right purpose, right motive, right timing, right decisions, right sensitivity, right respect, and right by His standards.**

**Last week we learned that we can approach God as though entering the family room to see our loving Father. At the same time, we have entered the throne room of God. He is our Ruler-King who expects our faithfulness and obedience. This might be an awkward thought for Americans who live in a republic – we do not have a king as sovereign. We live under a constitution that begins, “We the people...” We have a republic, in which people rule themselves and power is dispersed.**

**Christians live under God, who is the only One. We could say He governs like our American democracy is governed: by three branches. God sets the rules of His Kingdom in heaven and on earth; He judges rule breakers and rewards those who keep His laws; God is the executive administrator of His kingdom.**

**Ironically, the ordered freedom we know in America – where the people are sovereign – works best when the people humbly acknowledge God as their true Sovereign; when individuals allow His kingdom to rule in their lives. Knowing God as our King predisposes us to be wary of placing power in the hands of one man or an elite group.**

**When you pray, “May your kingdom come...” you are also asking for the Kingdom to be expanded into the lives of other people. When you think of people who do not know Christ, you are praying for their salvation every time you ask, “Thy kingdom come.”**

**When you pray, “May your kingdom come...” you are asking for the return of Jesus to establish His kingdom on earth. Wesley: “We pray for the coming of his everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of glory in heaven, which is the continuation and perfection of the kingdom of grace on earth ... the final renovation of all things by God’s putting an end to misery and sin, to infirmity and death, taking all things into his own hands ...”<sup>iii</sup> Yet, just as God does not force us to worship Him, He does not force His kingdom upon us. People freely join God’s kingdom and pledge allegiance to the King through a spiritual rebirth (*Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again,* John 3:3) Anyone can do it – it matters not where you came from (*Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me,”* Luke 9:23). God’s kingdom can come here and now.**

**When you pray “Thy kingdom come...” you are asking for something that is not yet to come into existence through your life. One who is facing a painful death – maybe cancer or something else – can pray “Thy kingdom come...” when they cannot take the pain any longer. Those who are under too much pressure... from job...not enough**

money... not enough time...not enough energy, can pray, “Thy kingdom come...” because they want and need God’s peace.

Some feel frustrated or defeated because of a divorce, a bankruptcy, or their kids have not turned out right, or one health issue after another. They can pray “Thy kingdom come...” because they want and need a second chance, a new start.

There are addicts; helpless slaves to drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, or money. They can’t say “no” to the habit and can’t say, “yes” to God. They too can pray “Thy kingdom come...” wanting God to enter their lives to give them the ability to do right.

Of course, we know folks who aren’t addicts, don’t face an emergency, and don’t feel defeated, but they want the principles of God to rule in their lives. They just want to love God better. They can pray “Thy kingdom come...” for his kingdom principles to be stronger in their lives this week than ever before.

Let’s be clear: God can and will bring His kingdom to earth without us. Yet He has given us to pray “Thy kingdom come” thereby allowing us to be a part of it. When you pray “Thy kingdom come” you are deciding to live for God, to glorify Him in your life, as you choose His principles. Life is a choice. Choose the Kingdom of God. Your prayer doesn’t bring God’s kingdom immediately into your life; but the seed is planted. As you continue to pray you nurture that seed to take root and eventually produce fruit.

You will live a better life when you sincerely pray “May your kingdom come in my life on earth as Your kingdom reigns in heaven.” God’s kingdom will be shown in a life that is ruled by love, self-discipline, and grace.

### **The Third Petition: “Thy Will Be Done”**

When you pray “Thy will be done” you are asking for God’s will to be done in your life on earth. Now, many who hear these words “are apt to imagine they are only an expression of, or petition for, resignation; for a readiness to suffer the will of God, whatsoever it be...”<sup>iv</sup> And that is a better attitude than refusing God’s will. Yet that is not what this petition is about. Here we are not praying a passive acceptance of whatever befalls us, but rather an active conformity to the will of God.

The angels in heaven do not pray about God’s will; they just do it, and do it willingly. In heaven, God’s will is done instantly, not later; God’s will is done enthusiastically, not halfheartedly. In heaven, God’s will is done completely, not partially.

If you know God as your Father, asking for His will to be done it is like saying, “I’ll do it your way.” You are saying that you trust God’s decision making and that you are willing to accomplish the desires of God that might not be done on earth if you do not do them. When you pray “Your will be done in my life,” you are asking God to steer you into His plan and purpose.

Following God’s plans is good for you. Some people think God’s will is like Santa’s bag of toys and candy...some think God’s will is like 911 – only to be called in an emergency...or like the red telephone on the President’s desk – to be used as a last resort. The fact is that doing the Lord’s will is appropriate at all times. God’s plan is not forced on us; we have choice in the matter. Yet those who seek and follow God’s plan for living, find peace, joy, fulfillment, and contentment beyond measure. *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you*

**may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect, Rom. 12:2.**

**This petition is not a request for God to change His will or to bless your will. As you pray “Thy will be done” you are asking God to help you find and do His will in your life. Interesting note: the petition “Thy will be done” is in the “aorist” tense in the original language (Greek), indicating immediate action: “Thy will be done right now, right here.” This does not preclude God’s will being done elsewhere at other times with other people. It simply reminds us that we can do God’s will now.**

**When the Lord’s Prayer is prayed daily, not just repeating the words but genuinely seeking God’s will with all your heart, God’s plan will be revealed. For some it comes gradually. For others, it is like turning on a light in a dark room.**

**How often have we prayed the Lord’s Prayer, saying the words “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done” expecting God to take action around us – shaping people and circumstances more to His will; and we did not expect (or want) God’s kingdom to come and His will to be done in our own lives? This week let us linger over those two petitions and let them seep into our souls.**

### **Praying This Week**

**As I said last week, there are seven positive and valuable results that come from praying the Lord’s Prayer daily. Last week we learned the first one:**

**1. You will magnify God each day when you pray, “Hallowed be Thy name.”**

**Today we have learned of the second and third results:**

**2. You will live by better principles when you pray “Thy kingdom come.”**

**3. God will guide you when you pray “Thy will be done.”**

**This week do not be concerned about where and when you pray. Just pray this prayer with Jesus Himself. The Bible reveals that God’s people prayed on a mountain, in a field, in a boat, in a house, in the Temple, in battle, doing their jobs, walking into their homes, walking out of their homes, and so forth.**

**Lastly, the Lord’s Prayer teaches us not to rush into God’s presence dumping out our problems... asking for this and for that. We are to come into God’s presence first to glorify Him... to acknowledge His agenda...to seek His will. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray “Thy will be done,” and to let God reveal His plan in our lives. As we pray together today let us do so slowly, deliberately, and honestly.**

**Let us lift our hearts to our Father in heaven ... that His kingdom come, that His will be done in our tasks and relationships today... in me and in us. Pray the Lord’s Prayer each day. The secret of your future lies in your daily routine.**

***Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you, Matt. 6:33.***

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<sup>i</sup> Elmer Towns, *Praying the Lord’s Prayer For Spiritual Breakthrough* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997).

<sup>ii</sup> John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon On The Mount, Discourse VI,” (1748); Outler & Heitzenrater, *Wesley’s Sermons, An Anthology*, (Nashville, Abingdon, 1991), 228.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.