

THE LORD'S PRAYER
Part 3: "Your Kingdom Come"

Matthew 6:7-13 ⁷ "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Summary

The main concern of Matthew 6,7-13 is that we learn to pray thoughtfully. Rather than heaping up "empty phrases as the Gentiles do," we should pray "like this: 'Our Father in heaven ...'" The goal of the current sermon series is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the Lord's Prayer in order to facilitate a more thoughtful prayer life. This particular sermon dealt with the phrase, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (6,10).

The kingdom was the focus of Jesus' proclamation and the framework from which he carried out his ministry. Jesus knew the challenges with understanding the meaning of the kingdom, and so provided multiple parables to help his audience grasp its significance. On the most basic level, the kingdom has several components—the vindication of the righteous, the defeat of evil, and the exaltation of the true King. In this regard, the kingdom has already come in part through Jesus Christ—sinners are freed from the power of Sin, death and the devil are defeated, and Jesus is exalted as the victorious Second Adam. At the same time, the kingdom has not come in fullness, for there remains a day, according to Revelation 21, when the righteous will be completely vindicated, the effects of the fall will be fully reversed, and the Lion and the Lamb will finally be lifted above all rule and authority. Praying "Let your kingdom come," then, involves both looking back and acknowledging that the kingdom has already come through Christ *and* looking forward to when Christ returns and brings His kingdom in all its fullness.

What we often forget, however, is that praying "let your kingdom come, let your will be done on *earth* as it is in heaven" means praying that God's kingdom and will would be done on "my earth," that is, in my life and in my body that was made from the dust of the earth. In other words, praying this phrase has ethical implications, demanding that (1) we identify areas where God's will is *not* sovereign and repenting accordingly; (2) we surrender our person kingdom agendas so that we might be effective representatives and workers of *the* kingdom.

The challenge to such commitments comes in different forms, including the devil, secular thinking, and the sinful nature. Focusing on the last of these, we do well to recognize that there is a rebellious nature deeply imbedded in our DNA such that as much as we recognize the good and as much as we occasionally want to do the good, we still do the bad. One of the distinctives about Christian, therefore, is the admission that we cannot change ourselves and need, instead, a Savior who gives us His Spirit and thereby effects transformation. For this reason, we cannot pray this phrase without looking to the cross and asking Jesus to enable us to pray, "Let your kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Discussion Questions

1. Step back and consider *how* you pray. Do you “heap up empty phrases” or do you pray thoughtfully, using the Lord’s Prayer as a guide for prioritizing what you should pray about? What are some steps you can take to adopt a more reflective prayer life? (E.g., resolve to pray the Psalms.)
2. Praying “Let your kingdom come” has a “bi-rectional” quality of looking back at the cross and looking forward to Christ’s return. How does praying this phrase guard against the pitfalls of being cynical or naïve? Which do you tend to gravitate towards?
3. Share one specific area where “God’s will” is *not* being done. By praying “let your will be done,” how is God calling you to change? Please be specific.
4. Discuss your daily and weekly schedules. Do they leave time for thinking about and living for the kingdom? What areas do you feel God is calling you to surrender so that you would have more time, energy, and resources for advancing his kingdom?
5. Following Pastor Paul’s suggestion, take time as a small group to pray the Lord’s Prayer rhythmically (meditatively): pause for about ten seconds after each phrase to reflect on what you are saying and how it relates to your current situation.