

Lord, Teach us to Pray

Matthew 6

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Study Revision

- The prayer is an expression of Jesus' greater work (project, mission).
- An invitation into Jesus' prayer life, which is the life of God.
- If we pray like Jesus, we'll experience God's life.
- Aware we've got our own ideas about prayer, we humbly say, just like the first disciples, "*Lord, teach us...*"

Revision of *our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name*

- This is where we begin, with *who*, not *what*, *why*, *how*, *when*?
- A welcoming, intimate, safe relationship with *Dad*.
- Dad's holy, sovereign, creator and sustainer of all things.
- When we realize that he is this kind of *Dad*, this is a paradigm shift.

First things First – an even greater paradigm shift

- *Not forgive me, or I need this or that*
- *You're not the center of the universe.* / Even humanity thought this in ordering the solar system.
- *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*
- We begin with the premise that God is up to something. God has a plan, a purpose, a mission, and some work to do in the world.
- We begin with the reality that he's actually doing something. He's not removed from the Earth, disinterested in its inhabitants.
- And, we learn that as Christians we are a part of something much, much bigger than our singular lives. We're invited to join the project.

- Jesus says this is how you should pray, but also how you should live. This is how our lives need to be ordered.

What is the Kingdom?

- In Matthew, Mark and Luke we hear Jesus speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God. – Lot's of perspectives
- This Kingdom is God's saving, redeeming, ruling, restoring work in the world.
- God is the King of the universe, he loves the world, he has a plan for the world, and he is bringing that plan into completion.
- Because the world is broken, because of sin, God's plan is to restore and rescue the world through Jesus.
- So, Jesus announces this Kingdom, this project, this mission. He inaugurates it, or ushers it in when he comes into the world. And it's ongoing today.
- The Kingdom is here, and it's coming. The movement has begun, and it continues.
- To pray "your kingdom come" is to align yourself with God's mission, project, work, plan in the world.

What is the will of God?

- The will of God is that the world will be rescued and restored, and that all people would willingly accept the grace and life he offers.
- To pray *your will be done as earth as it is in heaven* is to pray that this rescue and restoration would happen quickly, and happen fully.
- Now, as God's project unfolds around the world, we see lots of examples of how it's opposed or contrasted.
- When we pray *your will be done like it is in heaven*, we're asking that the will and kingdom of God would come into such fullness that it's no longer contrasted with evil, sin, suffering, pain, tears, brokenness, or bondage.

Living in the Kingdom – First things First

- Learn to seek the Kingdom first / God's interests before our own
- Later in Matthew Jesus is talking about money and physical needs (Matthew 6.33, *Seek first*) – We're not always great at trust.
- Exodus 15. 22-16. 2 – silly Israelites! We're not that foolish.
- It's so easy to lose perspective. Not only of God's plan is, but even who he is.
- Because we want to be in charge. We have since the garden. And we have to choose to trust Dad! This is a process:
 - We wanna be liked.
 - We wanna be rich.
 - We wanna be have influence and be popular.
 - We wanna matter.
 - We wanna do whatever we wanna do.
 - We wanna be kings and queens but we're not, we're sons and daughters and little finite kingdoms will never accomplish what God's will.
- And we know that but like Paul we're saying, *"I do the things I don't want to do, and don't do the things I know I really want to!"*
- Jesus says, *seek first the kingdom, align yourself with what I'm up to in the world, and trust that God will take care of and guide you.*

How do I pray with a Kingdom focus?

- Father, I know that you're good. I know that you've got a good plan for my family, my neighbors, my co-workers, and friends. I know you have good plan for the entire world. Show me how I can partner with you in helping that plan unfold in people's lives. Show me the people you love and are drawing to yourself. Show me where I can listen, show me where I should speak life and encouragement, show me when I need to be bold, show me where I can exemplify your kindness, grace, patience, mercy, and love. Help me to do this all in your strength and Spirit, and not all by myself.

How do I live that? – Discussion Questions

- Ask: How can I pray and partner with a Jesus-project mindset?
- Where can I think of others and serve others before myself?
- Could I listen more? (to both God and people)
- How can I use what I'm good at to point people to Jesus?
- By Name.

Discussion Questions (Cont.)

- Where do I see the Kingdom unfolding around me already? How can I join in with that?
- How does this understanding of prayer alter how I communicate and relate to God?
- What have I placed before God and his Kingdom? What do I need to repent (turn and go the other way) in?
- What's the good news that comes out of this teaching and truth from Jesus' prayer?