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Title: Teach Us to Pray: Your Kingdom...Your Will

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Scripture: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)

Text: [Luke 13:18-21](#)

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t's begin like we began last week with a community response. Repeat after me. Our. Father. In Heaven. Hallowed be your name. That was all we took on as we began a series on the Lord's Prayer. While the Lord's Prayer is the most recited set of words in the history of humanity, it was likely never meant to be that way. It was offered as a way to

teach us how to pray, not as the perfect prayer. So we are taking it apart in hopes that we will start living the prayer, not just saying it, that we will unleash its power for our lives.

Last week, we started with the opening salutation and the first petition and spent more time than you'd think on the first word, "our." In that opening word, we state our identity in Jesus. "God sent Jesus "...so that we might receive adoption as children..." (Galatians 4:4) In the amazing grace offered through Jesus, we are family, "...joint heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:17b) When we pray the word "our" we do so because of inheritance.

Because of this inheritance, we pray like a child who is talking to a parent, her daddy or his mommy. In fact, the word Jesus used in his native Aramaic language was Abba, which is daddy. Jesus wants us to experience the same intimacy with God that he had. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is saying, "My father is your father is our father."

Inheritance, intimacy, yet on high, in heaven. It is an important address. God is placed, located, in heaven which means He is the one who rules the cosmos. God is Lord of all God has made. Any less of a god wouldn't do us any good. When we pray to our father in heaven, we are so bold to make extravagant requests because we pray to the One who rules, who is "God the Father, Almighty, creator of heaven and earth."¹

All of this to begin the prayer and then, we looked at the first petition of six, "Hallowed be your name." God's name is holy and when we pray this

petition, we aren't just stating the obvious, we are committing to make God hallowed, revered and sacred. We will not try to whittle God down to size. We will not try to manipulate God. God's name will be honored in the way we use God's name, the way we pray and the way we live.

Inheritance, intimacy, power, and holiness: all of that in the opening salutation and the first petition. Now today, we look at the second and third petitions about God. It is worth noting that the way Jesus teaches us to pray by first talking about God's needs and addressing God's plans and then turn to ours. We are to first talk about God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. As I listen to our prayers, too often, it is just the other way around. We talk about our wants and needs. But that's not the way Jesus puts together his model prayer. God's program first; ours second.² Hallowed be your name. That's the first petition which we looked at last week.

Now to the second petition, "Your kingdom come." Repeat after me. Your. I know, I know. You think, "Here we go again, a long exposition on a pronoun." In a way yes because we need to stop and think for just a moment about what we are really saying when we say, "your" or "thy" as the way we pray it liturgically using King James English. Jesus is really putting us in our place. Jesus knows that we'd rather pray, "My Kingdom come" because if truth be told, we all like to think we are number one. We like to think we are in charge of our own lives, our own destiny, self-determined and self-directed. We start off as young child learning 'me' and spend the rest of our lives holding onto 'mine.'

To pray "your kingdom come" is to realize that you are no longer number one. You have never been. God is. God's king; you aren't. And because God is, you should seek God's kingdom and not your own glory in the way you live your life, in the things you buy, the way you think about your work, and especially, in the way you treat those around you. Do you? It's a good question. In all that I do and say, am I seeking first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, or my own glory?

'Your' reorients our understanding about our lives and our possessions. When we pray 'your', we are getting rid of 'mine.' We see that all of this isn't really mine or ours but God's. "It's yours, God. I know that it is." 'Your' is a reorientation of your worldview, your identity, your life. It's not mine, rather, yours. Say it that way, acknowledge ownership, as you repeat after me. Your. Now, kingdom.

What comes to mind when you hear that word? It's not a word that we use very much: pretty much only in church. We don't live in a kingdom. We live in a democracy. So what are we talking about? What are we praying for

when we use the word kingdom? The Bible uses the images in two ways. It is a time when God's kingdom is restored and when it is back the way it was supposed to be in the beginning and it will be in the end. When God created the world, how did he create it? God created it as good. God looked around every day, in every place and said, "My creation, my kingdom, it is good. God created this world to be God's kingdom, to reign over it.

What happened? God created a bunch of creatures, namely us, who decided that we didn't want God to be king. We rebelled against God and set up our own kingdoms, grabbed on and held onto me and mine and that is why things are in such a mess because truth be told, we are lousy kings. Our world is filled with injustice, war, turmoil, and death because of it.

When the bible talks about kingdom, it anticipates a time when God will take back his kingdom. Isaiah says it will be a "...beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace and says, 'God reigns.' ... and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isaiah 52:7, 10b) The book of Revelation says that this will happen when God sets up the throne of God for when Jesus returns and when this happens, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) The kingdom is coming at the end of time. But when Jesus teaches about the kingdom, he says it isn't just off in the future, the kingdom is also here and near.

Jesus talked about more about the kingdom than any other subject. He began his ministry saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:15) Then he sets about teaching what the kingdom is. He didn't do it with a bullet point list that you can check off to know you've finally arrived. Rather he told stories and used metaphors and similes to help us understand.

Jesus said the kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field that you would sell everything to buy. It's like a mustard seed that starts small, tiny and grows into a giant tree. It's like yeast; it permeates all, silently and pervasively. What Jesus is suggesting is that the Kingdom is not a place, but a condition, and it is already here.³ In fact, he said as much. When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered, "...the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17: 21)

What Jesus is suggesting is that goodness of God's kingdom has also been here, we just can't see it, and we don't know how to harness it. It's kind of like electricity. We like to say that Benjamin Franklin invented electricity with a kite and key and Thomas Edison figured out how to harness it. But

electricity was always there, ready to be tapped into, used, and made manifest⁴

This is what Jesus is teaching us about the kingdom. It has always been here and will always be here as long as there are places that perfectly reflect God's character and value. The kingdom is the place where things operate the way God wants it to be. It is the place of joy, truth, grace, health, light, and peace. God's kingdom is a good place because God is good. God's kingdom is a place of love because God is love. Say kingdom then, in that light, as the place that perfectly reflects the love and goodness of God, a place here and near and at the same time, coming in the end. Kingdom

But of course, one only needs to turn on the news and realize that the places that perfectly reflect God's character and value, where joy and love radiate are hard to find. So Jesus adds the word come. Pray the word "come."

The kingdom is already, but not yet. Jesus has come to bring it near. But it still far off. So we pray, 'come' and the prayer suddenly gets very active and very personal. It moves from a beautiful picture of a place of love and peace to a statement of hope that implies participation. To pray come implies two little words: *through me*. Your kingdom come, *through me*. God brings his kingdom into the world through us as we seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness.⁵

When the Pharisees ask Jesus, "When will the kingdom come?" Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21) That's why we can't just point around the world to evidence of the kingdom out there. It's not just happening out there. It's happening right there, in us. The kingdom is not something that primarily has to do with countries and nations. It has to do with each of us and how we live our lives. It's personal. The kingdom demands your heart, your life, your will, which is why Jesus says to pray "Your will be done." They are connected, intentionally, side by side, parallel petitions. Say it with me. 'Come.' Now, 'will'.

Will come. The kingdom will come. It will come when we make a personal decision to submit our will to God's will. Jesus clearly connects the kingdom of God and the will of God. What God wills in heaven is to be done on earth. He knows personally how challenging this part of the prayer is. He demonstrates the struggle when he prayed in Gethsemane, "...not my will but thine be done." He is what he'd taught about earlier when he said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but

only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21) You can't experience the kingdom without embracing God's will.

If Jesus taught us anything, it is how hard it is. The will of God involves struggle, and this struggle involves agony, loneliness, and courage. For Jesus, the struggle in Gethsemane involves his knowledge of God's will and his struggle to accept it. It is agony because the will of God is taking his life in a direction that he does not want to go. Before him looms the cross. Jesus knows all too well the reality of God's will.

To pray for God's will to be done can be dangerous. The will of God can lead us in a direction or to a place that we are not willing to go. It may lead us to an experience we do not want to face. It could cause us to meet people we really do not want to meet. The agony is bringing our will in line with the will of God will almost certainly involve sacrifice and change.⁶ But the kingdom can only, will only come with will. Say 'wil'l. Now,' on earth, as it is in heaven.'

So the kingdom of God is here, but it is not yet what it shall be. It is already, but not full and complete. That's why Jesus taught us to pray that the kingdom would come to earth just as it is in heaven. I like the way John Ortberg puts it: "May up there come down here." In other words, we pray, "May your sphere of authority, O God, be extended to this earth. Please arrange things down here just as you do up there. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May up there come down here."⁷

This is what we all should learn to pray. When we turn on the television and see another horrible mass shooting in a school, we should pray, "May up there come down here." When we witness the terrible humanitarian crisis of war, hunger and refugee camps, "May up there come down here." When we learn once again of the misuse of power of harassment and misconduct, we need to pray "May up there come down here."

In my neighborhood, in our country, in my family, in our office, in our church, in my staff, in my heart, in my attitude, in my beliefs, may God be king. May God set up things the way God likes them. May my will be God's will so that 'up there comes down here'.

These two petitions ultimately are personal and challenging but at the same time hopeful. The kingdom of is everywhere and God is opening the door to us not only to invite us in but to work through us to bring heaven on earth. In this way, God's kingdom coming and God's will being done is a partnership. Jesus knew exactly what he was doing when he taught us to pray. Dare you pray it with me? Then pray after me.

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

¹ Apostles Creed

² Robinson, Haddon. The Disciple's Prayer, Retrieved by subscription @ preachingtoday.com

³ Thy Kingdom Come. Jeffrey Arthur. July, 2011. Retrieved by subscription @ preachingtoday.com

⁴ Stroman, Dr. John A. Pray in This Way: Sermons on the Lord's Prayer (Protestant Pulpit Exchange Series) (Kindle Locations 366-367). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Carl, William, J. 111. The Lord's Prayer for Today, page 29.

⁶ Stroman, (Kindle Location 455).

⁷ John Ortberg. The Kingdom of God. Pepperdine University 2014, retrieved @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOJ8Jrrc8vs>