

The Lord's Prayer: Your Kingdom Come

Imagine you've got a yacht, and Jesus is also on board.

He knows everything about the boat, and He knows every aspect of the ocean you're in.

Question: Are you going to let Him be the captain or are you going to make Him the cabin boy?

How do you know whether He's the captain or the cabin boy?

The cabin boy only gets used when something needs fixing.

This is a six-week series on the Lord's Prayer.

In the last message, we saw that relationship with God as Father is the foundation of prayer.

We saw that this relationship was meant to be warm, intimate, personal.

To the point where we even get to call God 'Dad.'

Matthew 6:9-13

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

In this message, we go on to the next phrase that Jesus used in this pattern prayer: Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Kingdom of God

Your kingdom come: what does that really mean?

If you're used to just reciting this prayer, it's easy to pray something and not even understand what you're really praying.

In Acts 8, Philip the evangelist sees an Ethiopian driving a chariot.

As people did in those days, the Ethiopian was reading out loud.

And, as it turns out, he was reading from Isaiah.

Philip asked: Do you understand what you're reading?

The answer was no; he had no idea.

A lot of people are like that with prayer, praying things they don't really understand.

When my wife was a little girl, she used to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. King Kong will come."

I have no idea what was going on in her head.

But don't worry, she hasn't prayed like that for weeks.

So what does it mean?: Your kingdom come.

The word 'kingdom' is all about a place where a king rules.

So God's kingdom is where He rules.

So when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we’re praying for God’s rulership to take effect.

And His rulership is all about love.

When someone asked Jesus, “What’s the most important commandment?”

Jesus said, “Love the Lord...”

Then He said, “The second one is like...”

Then He said, “On these two commandments...”

So love is the primary thing.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that is in rebellion against God.

A world that pays lip service to love, but doesn’t practise it.

And wants to define love its own way instead of letting God do that.

Which brings us to the second half of this part of the prayer.

Your will be done on earth...

It’s a prayer for God’s will to be done.

Because God gets to decide what’s right and what’s wrong.

He gets to decide what love is and what it isn’t.

He’s the only one with the infinite knowledge and wisdom to do so.

So over the rest of this series, I’m going to show you how I use this prayer as a template for my praying.

Starting with: Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

1. I pray for me

When Norman Vincent Peale was a boy, he found a large cigar and hurried off to a secluded spot to try it out.

He didn’t like it, but he felt grown up, at least till he saw his father coming.

Hoping to distract his father, he pointed to a billboard advertising a circus.

“Can I go?” he begged. “Can I go to the circus when it comes to town? Please, dad?”

“Son,” his father replied, “One of the first lessons you need to learn about life is this: never make a petition while at the same time trying to hide a smouldering disobedience behind your back.”

I pray for me to be obedient to God’s requirements.

Because sin gets in the way of prayer.

Psalm 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

In the NT, Peter applies this principle specifically to marriage.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

So I want to deal with me first.

This is my opportunity to confess sins to the Lord.

Now if you don't have any sins to confess, you can skip this section and go get a cup of coffee.

But if you're like the rest of us, take this time to do business with God.

The problem is that we are so easily hoodwinked into sin.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

The sin which so easily ensnares us.

Do you find that there are certain sins that you easily lapse into?

If you're scratching to think of things to confess to the Lord, I've found some suggestions in this list in Galatians.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...

Any of those apply to you?

And I can think of more than that.

All the self-sins for a start: selfishness, self-centredness, self-aggrandisement, self-will.

Add to that, sins like pride, the love of money, complacency, hard-heartedness, stubbornness, unforgiveness, resentment.

All of these are in the Bible.

This isn't an opportunity to feel like a miserable worm, but to do business with God.

And to exercise faith.

What I mean by that is this:

Galatians 5:24

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

So exercise some faith that whatever sins you may be battling with are nailed to the cross.

The next thing I do is ask the Lord to fill me with the love of God.

Because my natural, human love is completely inadequate.

Jesus said that love for God is the most important commandment.

And the second most important is love for others.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

If you never pray to be filled with the love of God, you're failing to pray for the most important thing of all.

2. Pray for your church

Unless you're in a perfect church, your church needs all the help it can get.

Pray for your leaders.

For wisdom, for courage, for insight.

Someone said: If you want a better pastor, pray for the one you've got.

But remember: this part of the prayer is all about the implementation of the will of God and that God will rule.

It's all about "Your kingdom come. Your will be done..."

The problem, of course, isn't God's end, but our end.

So really, what we ought to be praying for is that the church will submit wholeheartedly to the will of God.

What is God's will?

Love: love God, love each other.

Pray for the love of God.

Pray for revival, because that's what it's going to take.

Pray that God's will will be done in the church as it is in heaven.

That's a big prayer, isn't it?

3. Pray for the lost

"Lost" is a term Jesus used to describe those who don't know God as He told stories about lost sheep and lost coins.

Family, friends, neighbours, workmates, schoolmates; they all need our prayers.

One time, the apostle Paul was preaching in Athens.

Acts 17:30

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, God commands everyone to repent.

It's not a suggestion, or a request; it's a command.

But what if I'm already a good person?

Well, what is a good person?

Do you know what my definition of a good person was before I became a Christian?

Me.

I know. It sounds arrogant.

And I would never have realised it back then.

But I thought I was a good person.

And guess who got to define what a good person was?

Me again!

So let me tell you a story that Jesus told about Himself and you and me and the whole human race.

You'll find this story in Luke 19.

A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Just to help you out, the nobleman is Jesus, who was going to heaven to receive His kingdom, then He would return to earth.

So he called ten of his servants, gave them some money, and said to them, 'Do business till I come back.'

Then He - the nobleman, who is Jesus - left.

But His citizens hated Him and they sent a delegation after Him saying, "We won't have this guy ruling over us."

So who are these citizens who won't let Jesus rule over them?

They are all the citizens of Planet Earth who live on His land, breathe His air, eat His food, fish in His oceans, grow stuff in His soil.

And yet, despite the fact that they live by His grace, they reject Him and His rulership of love.

Instead, they choose to do things their own way, define for themselves what goodness is and what love is.

This is the condition of the citizens of Planet Earth.

This planet is in rebellion against God.

And if you read to the end of Jesus' story to find out what happened to those rebellious citizens, it ain't pretty.

No wonder Paul says that God commands all men everywhere to repent.

4. How to pray

How to pray for people who don't know Jesus.

1. Pray that God will grant them a soft heart

Acts 19:9

... some were hardened and did not believe...

I like to use coconut oil as a moisturiser.

But right now, as the weather is getting cooler, I almost need an ice pick to get it out of the jar.

For lots of people, their hearts are like that.

Hard and resistant to what God wants to say to them.

So pray for a softening.

2. Pray that God will open their eyes

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

The devil is actively at work to blind unbelievers to the truth of the gospel.

And they aren't even aware of it.

I wasn't aware of it in my life before coming to know Jesus.

I was just blundering through life, totally unaware that I was on the wrong path.

Breaking God's laws.

Oblivious to that and the consequences.

Totally ignorant of God's plan for my life and His purpose for creating me.

Yet, in all my rebellion, I still considering myself to be a good person.

But I thank God that someone was praying for me and my eyes were opened.

3. Pray for labourers in the harvest

Luke 10:2

The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Jesus is talking about the harvest of souls.

And the need for workers to be involved in the harvest.

The problem is not the harvest, but the lack of workers.

Guess who those labourers are?

Us. We are the labourers.

So when I pray for those who don't know Jesus, I pray first that God will send me into the harvest.

But I know that not everyone is going to listen to me.

So I pray that the Lord will send other labourers to reach those on my list that I can't reach myself.

4. Pray that God will put His fear into them.

Psalm 25:14

The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

Proverbs 14:27

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.

If you want someone to turn to God and receive the gift of eternal life, they must first experience the fear of God.

The fear of God will open their eyes to a whole bunch of things.

Like it did for me.

For instance, it will open their eyes to how far short they've fallen of God's expectations.

It will open their eyes to God's perfect justice and that there will come a day of judgment.

It will open their eyes to God's unlimited power which He will use to enforce His judgments at the end of this age.

When the fear of God is instilled in a person's life, they will be ready to receive God's mercy, and ready to believe the gospel.

These are the main things that I pray for in this part of the Lord's prayer.