

## The Lord's Prayer Your Kingdom Your Will

For the last couple of weeks, we have been in a new series on the Lord's Prayer called "Teach Us To Pray."

Jesus taught his followers a model—a kind of prayer template. It shows us how to enter the presence of God so we can experience the presence of God.

In doing so, Jesus invites us into a shared relationship with His Abba Father, His dad, a heavenly Father that will always be faithful, always listen to us, and always be there for us. A Father who is high above any Earthly father. A father who will never leave us, who always listens, who is totally holy and and who will always do right by us.

So, with all this in mind, Jesus instructs us to begin our prayer by acknowledging and praising Him for who He is. We saw that last week.

Now, before we begin today's lesson, let's start again by reciting the entire prayer together. **You ready?**

*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.*

**Matthew 6:9-13**

Today we come to the next part of the prayer that deals with God's kingdom and His will. We're moving from a focus on God and who He is, to us, and our part in His plan.

So, before we get to that let me slow down a bit and define these terms (*the kingdom of God, The will of God*).

### **1. What Do these Terms Mean?**

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

We don't use the word "**kingdom**" very much these days, and when we do, we're usually talking about a place, like the kingdom of Nepal, the United Kingdom or the Magic Kingdom.

In each of these cases I just mentioned, a kingdom is a specific geographical place defined by borders. But the Greek word for "kingdom" in the Bible puts the emphasis on the **rule or reign** of the king rather on the place that king exercises that reign. Even the English word "**kingdom**" reveals that emphasis by combining two words *king* and *dominion*.

Now Jesus talked a lot about God's Kingdom and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matter of fact, His very first sermon is described in the Bible as, "*Repent, for God's kingdom has come near*" (**Matt 4:17 NIV**). He taught stories called parables designed to illustrate what God's kingdom was like.

The Bible calls the Christian message about Jesus' death and resurrection "*the gospel of the kingdom*" and that it will be preach all over the world before the end comes.

**Matthew 24:14 NIV**, "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*"

Jesus believed and taught that by his coming to Earth, God's kingdom reign had come closer (was at hand), and that through his death and resurrection the doors to God's kingdom was opened to all people.

But He also said that His kingdom was not from this world in John 18. But Isaiah, and Daniel and Zechariah and Revelation says that one day, ultimately, God will finish this plan by physically setting up His kingdom on Earth. And that is the event that Jesus is instructing His disciples to pray for.

So, for now, people enter the doors to God's kingdom by trusting in Jesus' payment for their sins through His death and then embracing a new life through the power of His resurrection.

But when Jesus comes back to Earth, God will powerfully, complete His kingdom reign by abolishing evil and vindicating good as He makes every human being to stand before Him to give an account.

**Isaiah 9:7 NIV** foretold of this: *“Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”*

**Zechariah 14:9 NIV**, *“The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.”*

Now, in between that first coming and the second coming of Jesus is what we call the Church Age, the time of grace where God is building His kingdom in human hearts, one subject at a time. That is the time in which we now live.

It is a time where a tension exists between the opening of the doors to God’s kingdom and the completion of God’s kingdom.

Some Bible scholars call this a tension between the **“already”** and the **“not yet”** aspects of God’s kingdom.

Through Jesus, our **sins are already forgiven**, but because of the ***“not yet”*** we **still struggle** with the power of **sin** in our lives, still **falling** and **failing**.

Through Jesus, our salvation is already guaranteed and we’re promised **complete healing and restoration** when Christ comes again, but because of the ***“not yet”*** our bodies **still get sick** and we still **struggle with doubts** and **fears**.

Already the **powers of evil and darkness have been defeated** by Jesus through his death and resurrection, yet because of the ***“not yet”*** there’s still evil and darkness in our world.

So, when we pray, *“your kingdom come”* we’re not simply declaring the ***“already”*** part, but we’re specifically looking forward to the ***“not yet”*** part.

Now, in the same respect that the kingdom is an already but not yet reality, so is the **“Will of God.”**

*“Your kingdom come, **Your Will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Your Will Be Done! *What are we praying here? What is “the will” of God?*

**First, what is the “Will” of God. Well, I think most of us are aware that a Legal “Will” by definition: is simply a legal declaration of a person's wishes.**

**But let illustrate another way:** *Laurie and I are having our house built as we speak. We sat down and put on paper what we **wanted** to see in our new house. We have owned a number of houses and we’ve learned a few things each time we’ve built a new one. There are some things **we want done differently** in this house, and there are some things **we want to be the same**, and there are other new things we strongly **desire** to be incorporated that we didn’t have before. Now, after finishing up those lists, we sat down with an architectural designer and came up with a **set of plans**. We’re about 2/3’s the way through the building process, and I am happy to report that so far things are being done in accordance with **our wishes**.*

Did you catch several words that I used in that illustration?

***Wants, desires, plans, wishes!***

Jesus is asking His disciples to pray for God’s Kingdom and Will to be done! That His wants and desires and plans and wishes would be done!

It isn’t like He is asking us to declare these two facts like He was when He instructed us to pray in the first part of this prayer.

In the first part, “Our Father who is in Heaven, Hallowed be your Name,” He invited them to acknowledge Who God is and share in His relationship with Him as Our Father, and to acknowledge Where He resides, and the truth about His character.

But in this next part, He instructs His disciples to declare their allegiance to God’s dominion and align their desires, wishes and wants with His.

It isn’t an acknowledgment of a fact already realized. It is a kingdom that has begun in us and that we are praying will come completion, a kingdom in which His will would be done.

And the revealing proof behind the assumption that this is a request that still needs to be answered by God, is seen in the last half of that **instruction...**

*“Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done, **on Earth as it is in Heaven.**”*

We know that the kingdom and will of God as it exists in Heaven looks a lot different in Heaven than it does on Earth right now. That is why Jesus is instructing His followers to pray for that reality **to come** and **to be done**.

The Bible clearly teaches that God's will is often frustrated here on Earth.

In just 208 years of Israel's history there were **5 Good Kings & 33 Bad kings**.

How are those bad kings described? Each one: Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Ahizah, Athaliah, Shallum and 28 more ***"He did evil in the sight of the Lord."*** They did not live according to the will of God, and people suffered and died because of it. Not what God willed, wished, wanted or planned!

And the good ones (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah), ***"He did what was right in the sight of the Lord."*** They lived in accordance with the will of God.

Until God's kingdom comes, His will is not always followed. Evil kings over kingdoms impose their wills over His good will.

It is not that God somehow lacks the power to fulfill his will, but that God often chooses to work out his purposes in a way that respects the consequences of Adam and Eve who led the fall of the human race.

God didn't snuff out Adam and Eve and start all over again after they disobeyed and rebelled against Him. He didn't snuff out Satan when he fell and took a third of the angels with Him. He lets created beings live out the consequences of their choices. And He gives us that same grace and space.

He allows us to have a measure of freedom and at the same time He is working out his plans despite our stubborn resistance to his will. Our freedom to sin may impact God's immediate will, but God's ultimate plan is still absolutely sure to come to pass. People can impede and frustrate God's will on earth.

It was not God's will that Adam and Eve sinned, or that Satan rebelled, or that **Satan hindered Paul** in His missionary journeys, or that Herod cut off John the Baptist's head, or that Hitler killed 6 million Jews, or that the man across the street raped his neighbor's daughter or that a gunman shot up a school.

That isn't God's will! No, that is His will being frustrated.

People **quench the Spirit** of God when they despise what He says, as Paul said to the Thessalonians. Satan seeks whom He may devour and **hinders the work of God** as Paul said to them too.

**1 Thessalonians 2:18 NIV**, *“For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.”*

**1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 NIV**, *“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.”*

**1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV**, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

*“Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done, **on Earth as it is in Heaven.**”*

Unlike the way things go in Heaven, on planet Earth, God’s will is frustrated by evil, by sin, by the selfish desires of humans.

**I hear a lot of well-meaning Christian people** saying things to their family and friends like, *“Well, I guess it was God’s will”* to a grieving wife at her husband’s funeral after his battle with prostate cancer. Or it’s the 24-year-old college student gritting his teeth as he says, *“It must be God’s will”* when his fiancé breaks up with him. It’s the troubled married couple throwing up their hands in desperation and saying, *“It must be God’s will”* because they can’t see any way through their problems and issues.

**I think we are too quick to say** that this and that must have been God’s will, because He allowed it to happen. Can you see Eve saying, sorry Adam, it must have been God’s will that we eat this or He would never have let Satan deceive me? Or Paul saying, well it must have been God’s will that we not go to Thessalonica because He let Satan hinder us. Or one of our Christian friends saying, well it must have been God’s will that I divorce you ‘cause He would never have let me run into this other person who happens to be my soulmate.

I hear people say that nothing happens on planet outside of God’s will. POOY!

If that’s true, Jesus would never have instructed us to pray for God’s kingdom to come and will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven if it was already true.

**Jesus, in frustration said this in Matthew 23:37 NKJV, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I **wanted** to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not **willing!**”**

Sinful people and evil forces frustrate God’s will on earth, unlike they do in heaven. **But there is coming a day**, rest assured, when the reality of this prayer request will take place.

**Revelation 22:1-5, 22 NIV**, “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. **The throne of God** and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. **20 He who testifies** to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

With those meanings of the kingdom and will of God clearly in place...

## **2. What does this part of the prayer mean for us who pray it today?**

As followers of Jesus, we’re called to live under God’s reign even though the kingdom hasn’t yet arrived on earth in power. We must seek to live our lives by the values of God’s reign, even though we still live in **"occupied"** territory.

As Christ followers, we are first and foremost, citizens of God’s kingdom. Even though we hold dual citizenship with the geographical area we live in, be it the United States or China, or Ecuador or Russia, our kingdom allegiance will be determined by the values and culture we embrace.

As followers of Jesus, citizens of God’s domain, we must seek to live by His kingdom values, His wishes, His desires and wants, His will. Even though we seek to be good citizens of the U.S, our ultimate loyalty is to God’s reign.

**So, we pray**, *Father, we long for your kingdom to come from Heaven to Earth, we long for it because we want your will to be done here. And I as a citizen of your kingdom, bend the knee before you and I willingly align my will to yours. I submit my desires, my wants, my wishes **to the scrutiny of your will.***

I can't help think about Jesus' experience in Gethsemane the night before his execution. Jesus went to this private place to pray and as he waited for his betrayer and executioner to come, he spent an agonizing night in prayer.

As Jesus prayed, according to **Matthew 26:39 NIV**, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

Jesus knew he was about to experience the penalty for all the sinfulness of humanity in his death. Jesus knew he was about to be forsaken by his friends, he knew he was about to undergo terrible physical suffering at the hands of professional Roman executioners, and he knew that he was going to feel totally forsaken by God as he is left to die on the cross.

So, he cries out to His Father for another way, some other method to accomplish the same goal, another way to offer forgiveness and restoration to the human race. But He concludes, "Not as I will, but as you will."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus in a very real sense prayed, *"Father, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* even though the will of God came at great personal cost to himself.

SO, WHEN WE PRAY FOR GOD'S KINGDOM REIGN TO COME, WE ARE AFFIRMING OUR DESIRE TO **FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE**.

It is likely that Jesus prayed this prayer **three times** (He would break, check on the disciples and return to prayer), but God's answer didn't change.

*Some of us wonder, can prayer really change anything then? If God has thought out all the angles and He is perfect, changing God's mind seems like absurdity. So why pray at all?*

Some have even suggested that the only purpose of prayer is to align our will with God's will, not to ask God to intervene and change outcome.

Yet the Bible clearly teaches that our prayers do influence the outcome of events. I don't understand exactly how God's plan and our prayers fit together. Perhaps when God decided upon his will, in his foreknowledge he knew what we would ask him to do in that situation and took our request into consideration as he decided what he would do in that situation. **Confusing!**



Regardless of how we deal with this mystery, the fact remains that when we pray for God's kingdom reign, we are affirming that we trust God to answer appropriately, according to his will and that we have confidence in the future culmination of God's kingdom plan.

I don't think the will of God is best thought of as unbending.

Remember, He is our Heavenly Dad. So, think of His will as a loving will, a heartfelt resolve of almighty God who seeks to express his love and grace to the His children.

It's a certain will, but not an unbending one. It's a will that allows for the integrity of our own good wills, while never being limited by them.

At times, life seems like it is out of control and random. A **drunk driver** crosses the double yellow line and crashes into the car in front of us but not our car. *Why the car in front of us, and not us?*

*Was that random, an accident of chance?* It doesn't always make any sense.

In those times of doubt and uncertainty, to pray "*your kingdom come, your will be done*" we're affirming that we're **confident that God's plan will be completed**. When we live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" we affirm our confidence that the culmination of God's plan will someday answer our "**not yet**" questions.

All of us have questions we'd like to ask God when we get to heaven. I do too. I want to know why God answers miraculously in one case and not in another. I'm not wise enough to figure them out.

**But I do believe** that one day God's kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven. So, until then I pray, "**Father your kingdom come, your will be done,**" **on earth as it is in Heaven. It is an affirmation** in the future culmination of God's plan and the alignment of my will with His.

*Are you a follower of Jesus? Have you embraced the gift He gave you when He submitted His will to the will of the Father and gave up His life in payment for your sin? **Start there!***

*As a Christ follower, are you living as a citizen whose allegiance is to God's kingdom? Have you aligned your will, wishes, wants and desires to God's?*  
**I invite you to Pray with me this morning!**