

Today I Pray, 2: Thy Kingdom come...

Reconnect – March 7, 2010

Text: Matthew 6:9-10; Romans 8:26-27

Key Thought: What God has in store for us and our world is better than we could ever imagine – if we will only choose to be a part of it.

[Jesus said,] "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"

Intro: N-O

- There's a word in the English language that is very small, but has immense power – or at least, we hope it has immense power – if we have the courage to use it
- Anyone want to take a stab at that word?
- It's "n-o" – see, I can even spell it
- When a child learns it, they go nuts with it – they say no to everything, even stuff that they like, that they want – just because they CAN – it's the expression of their power over their environment
- It's when we grow up that it gets more complicated

Q: Who can say "no" to you? Who says "no" to us?

- "No" is an expression of will – one person's will, or the weight of who or what they represent – and how it then affects what we can or have to do or not do
- And we hate no – at least, I hate no
- I know that shocks a lot of you – sorry to be so controversial, but I'll say it again: I don't like hearing the word "no" said to me
- "No", when said to me, is understood as "know" – as in, I know I can get around this word and get what I want – all I have to do is figure out how – because of course, my way is the best way
- Except when it's not
- The problem is that many times – maybe pretty much all of the time – I can't see it – and when I can't see it, that's when it can cause me a world of hurt

Father knows best

- Thankfully, there are others who can – like my wife, longtime friends, those who get past the "me"
- And that means God, too
- Jesus comes to represent God to people like me – to get us to reconnect with Him – and so when He teaches his friends and followers how to pray, one of the things He knows has to be dealt with is our endless ability to deceive ourselves with regards to what is best for us
- That's the section of the Lord's Prayer that we're dealing with today:

Read Text: Matthew 6:9-10

[Jesus said,] "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"

Two little words, one little sound different:

- The first thing we have to understand in this section of the prayer is the difference between two little words – and they would be “my” and “Thy”
- In case we’re not sure which one belongs to who, one of them is helpfully capitalized – meaning that it’s God’s, not ours
- Every choice we make is either towards “my” or “thy” – one tiny change in how we make the sound – it involves using your teeth – you have to WORK at it, sink your teeth into it

[have people say it with me – focus on their teeth]

Thy Kingdom come

- The spread of God’s rule – the place, the realm where He is in charge and recognized as such
- It’s a very different sort of place than the “Kingdom” we live in each day – in fact, it’s sort of upside down
- Look at what Jesus first said when he burst on the scene: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near” – “Change, because the way things are done around here is going to change”
- And he changed everything, one life at a time
- Currency exchange – **agio** – one currency doesn’t work in another place – it has to be exchanged
- The things that we do that get us ahead here, in this Kingdom, this realm, are things that generally put us forward: we can learn how to make ourselves look better, how to not take responsibility for what goes wrong, how to frame discussions to get what we want, how to use people to get ahead
- But those things aren’t accepted in God’s Kingdom – it’s like coming back from Mexico with pesos – you can’t spend it on anything here, big or small – it has to be exchanged – traded for something of value in God’s realm
- We trade our actions, we trade our desires – we trade ourselves – and God gives us something incredible back in return
- **Thy Kingdom come**, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Thy will be done

What is “the will of God” for my life?

- The idea that there is a “perfect way” for your life to go – if you could just be a part of it, then everything would be great...!
- Problem with this is that 1) it’s not mentioned in the Bible and 2) it gets in the way of living the life that God wants to LIVE with us – we’re either always looking back (“Did I get that right? Did I marry the right person... get the right job, make the right choice here and here and here?”) or looking far forward (“When will this happen? When the time comes to get married... will I make the right choice? Is this person the right choice, or should I take door number 2?”)
- It turns life into a game show, where you’re never sure if you should take what you have or trade it away for door number 2 – it causes us to doubt what God gives us and treat as second-class the people that are in our lives and the experiences that we have – it takes the joy out of everything – which is definitely NOT God’s will
- “Will” – if you can’t talk about it – if you can’t live it with other people – then you’re dead and we’re talking about your LAST will and testament – because it’s dead if you don’t live it

- Will is more of a desire – and a life led out of that desire, that end goal in mind – it’s passionate, it’s stubborn, it’s tough, it’s decisive, it’s exuberant, and it pumps it’s fist in the air when it gets its way

“Will” – both what God wants (like from us) and what He’s already doing (Carson’s Matthew 170)

- What is “God’s will”? What does God really want? Too often we talk about “God’s will for our lives” without ever looking at the bigger picture – we get bogged down in ourselves and our own subplots
- But big picture – what does God want? **What is His will? (ask the question)** – healing, set free, peace, justice, see what’s right get done, contentment, joy – look at the life of Jesus and what He chose to do with His time – “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near” – He was the embodiment of the Kingdom, of the will of the Father
- Thy Kingdom come, **Thy will be done** on earth as it is in heaven

On earth as it is in heaven

- All the rest of the prayer comes out of His will, His Kingdom – bread, forgiveness, rescue – all of these are the things that God wants to bring here on earth as it already is in heaven***
- In other words, perfectly – completely – God’s way at work in the world
- We don’t really know what that kind of blanket coverage is like – we live in a world of bureaucracy, of technology, where things seem to take on a mind of their own
- We find it hard enough to try to control the people around us (and that’s not very healthy, either) to try to get what we think is best for them – us, our friends, our families, neighbours, customers, whoever
- **Think about “Survivor”** – an artificial scenario that gets created to see who is able to ultimately see their will be done
- In this morning’s clip, Cirie and Tom are competing in a clash of wills – and it’s a popular show because it’s a metaphor for life
- Just when you think you have it all figured out – just when I think it’s smooth sailing – someone else comes along with their own design, their own plan, their own way of doing things – and we either adjust or get “voted out”
- The section of the Bible called James, likely written by one of Jesus’ brothers, says that the reason that people fight and quarrel is because we can’t have what we want
- And he goes on to say that the answer for that is to give ourselves over to God – to include ourselves in His realm, His corner of the earth where things go like they go in heaven, where He is in charge
- Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done **on earth as it is in heaven**

Key Thought:

What God has in store for us and our world is better than we could ever imagine – and he invites us to work with Him to see it happen sooner.

...we don’t even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all things knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will. **(Romans 8:26-27, NLT)**

Conclusion: Coming Soon

“What then might it mean to pray this Kingdom-prayer today? It means... that we look immediately out upon the whole world that he made, and we see it as he sees it. Thy Kingdom Come: to pray this means seeing the world in binocular vision. See it with the love of the Creator for his spectacularly beautiful creation; and see it with the deep grief of the Creator for the battered and battle-scarred state in which the world now finds itself. Put those two together, and bring the binocular picture into focus: The love and the grief join into the Jesus-shape, the kingdom-shape, the shape of the cross – never was Love, dear King, never was Grief like thine! And, with this Jesus before your eyes, pray again, *Thy Kingdom Come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!* We are praying, as Jesus was praying and acting, for the redemption of the world; for the radical defeat and uprooting of evil; and for heaven and earth to be married at last, for God to be all in all. And if we pray this way, we must of course be prepared to live this way.” (Wright, The Lord and His Prayer, p.31)

- There are days when I don't feel like praying this way – but if I do it anyway, if I put my life in God's hands one more time – then eventually, my feelings follow
- Other times, I want to follow God, but my will seems so small in the face of what's going on in my life – but again, this is the prayer God wants us to pray, it's the one He wants to answer

Response:

- **Play Rob Thomas song “Someday”**
- **Pray “The Lord's Prayer” to conclude**