

January 19, 2020

The Lord's Prayer
Thy Kingdom Come
Matthew 6:5-13

Opening words: The Lord's Prayer has been called "The Greatest Prayer" and the cornerstone of the Christian faith. It has been recited by billions of believers through the ages and is cherished by everyone, regardless of theology or tradition. We recite the words regularly at Western Reserve. It is safe to say we recite the Lord's Prayer about 200 times a year, including Sunday morning worship services, Lenten vesper services, Holy Week services, as well as weddings and funerals. We know the words, but do we understand the meaning behind these words? In this sermon series, *The Lord's Prayer*, your understanding is my goal. You may remember this from last week.

The Gospel of Matthew can be divided into five great discourses. Our reading for this series comes from the first one. We call it the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord's Prayer is at the very center of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is trying to teach the disciples how to pray correctly, so he gives them a model prayer to follow. We looked at the opening line last week, *Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name*. Jesus is telling the disciples, and us, every prayer must contain a praise element. Today, we look at the next line, *thy kingdom come, thy will be done*. It reminds us every prayer must have an obedience element. Do your prayers express obedience? How obedient are you to God's will? Those are two questions you must answer today. Our scripture reading for the entire sermon series is Matthew 6:5-13. Let me call this message *Thy Kingdom Come*.

Matthew 6:5-13 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father who art in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Joyce Meyer (born 1946) is an American author and speaker. She once said, "*Obedience to God is the pathway to the life you really want to live.*" I cannot disagree with that quote. If that quote makes you think, say, "**Amen!**"

History tells us Edward VI (1537-1553) of England sat on the throne in the 16th century. He is remembered as being a very spiritual. He attended worship regularly. He stood when the Bible was read. He took notes on the weekly message and studied those notes later. And, he strived to apply the Gospel to his daily life, altering his opinions and actions. No one questioned his sincerity, because he always surrendered to God's will. Here is an interesting question. Will you be remembered as one who did it your way? Will you be remembered as one who did it God's way? If that makes you think say, "**Amen!**"

Today, we look at this line in the Lord's Prayer: *Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done.*" In order to understand that line you must be able to answer this question. What is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is not a location, like 12 Paradise Way. The Kingdom of God is not limited to a certain time, like during the time of King David. The Kingdom of God can't be understood in human terms. It is much more elusive. If you do not believe me, then look at the teachings of Jesus. The Kingdom of God was central to his teaching. Sometimes Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God in the past. He said Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets were in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes, he speaks of the Kingdom of God in the present. In Luke 17:11, Jesus said, the Kingdom of God is, "in the midst of you." Sometimes, he spoke of the Kingdom of God in the future. He taught people to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It is all quite confusing. Theologians and Bible teachers don't clarify the matter. William Barkley (1907-1978) was a Bible professor at the University of Glasgow. He wrote a popular Bible commentary on the New Testament. He sold 1.5 million copies of those commentaries. I own one. In that commentary, he defines the Kingdom of God as a society in this world where God's will is perfectly done, as it is heaven. That maybe correct but it is a little wordy. Let me answer the question for you. I believe, the Kingdom of God can be summarized in one word, obedience. We are part of the Kingdom of God anytime we obey God. We are not part of the Kingdom of God when we don't obey God. With that in mind, say the line in the prayer again. *Thy Kingdom come thy will be done.* It's all about obeying God's word. How obedient are you to God? If that makes you think, say, "**Amen!**" We should not be surprised, because, being obedient is a dominant theme throughout the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Do you remember these stories?

Do you remember Noah's story? At the center of it is obedience. According to Genesis 6, the world had grown so wicked God decided to start over again. There is only one righteous man left, Noah. God tells Noah of His plans to destroy the world with water

and commands Noah to build an ark of cypress wood to save himself and his family. There traveling partners will be the various animals. Noah hears God's words and begins to build the ark on the driest day of the year. The people must have thought he was crazy, but he obeyed God. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

Do you remember Moses's story? At the center of it is obedience. According to Exodus 3, God spoke to Moses through a burning bush that was not consumed by the flames. The sight was odd to Moses's eyes, but the words God spoke to him were painful. God asks him to do the one thing Moses feared, face his past. You remember the story. Moses, a Hebrew, is raised in the palace of the Pharaoh. Yet, he never forgets his roots and on an ugly day Moses killed an Egyptian defending one of his own, a Hebrew. Moses runs away and plans to never return to Egypt, but God had other plans for him. God tells Moses to return to Egypt to liberate his people. Moses tries eluding his divine mission, but in the end, Moses returns and obeys God. The rest is history. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

Do you remember Mary's story? At the center of it is obedience. Christmas was just a few weeks ago. According to Luke 2, Mary was a teenage girl with her entire life in front of her. She must have dreamed of being a respectable Jewish wife with a pack of youngsters. Unfortunately, that was not God's plan for her life. Of all the women who had ever lived, Mary grabbed God's attention. The angel said, she was highly favored, but Mary must have had her doubts. She is going to give birth to a boy and name him Jesus. He is the son of God, Himself. Two thousand years later, we still admire her, but on that day many scoffed. Discarding the personal plans for her life, she obeys God and changes this world forever. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

Do you remember Jesus's story? At the center of it is obedience. Jesus did nothing wrong. He lived for thirty-three years and never committed a single sin. If salvation can be earned, then Jesus was home free. Unfortunately, salvation cannot be earned. We are saved by grace and by grace alone. Salvation is only possible by the sacrificial acts of Jesus. According to Mark 14, after Jesus ate the annual Seder with the disciples, he went to the garden to prayer. The scriptures say he was overwhelmed with sorrow, so he prayed these words, "*Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.*" It was God's will for Jesus to die an agonizing death, so we have an opportunity to spend eternity in heaven. Jesus didn't like it, but Jesus obeyed. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

The problem is not ignorance. The problem is obedience. Don't tell me you don't know what God expects you to do. You know you are to love unconditionally. You know you are to forgive. You know you are to have faith. You know you are to respond to human need. You know you are to live generous lives, giving your time, talent and your financial resources. You know these things, but do you obey? How obedient are you? If that makes you think, say, "**Amen!**" Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

Mary Fairchild is a Christian blogger. In a blog called *Why Is Obedience to God Important*, she says there isn't a single reason why we shouldn't be obedient to God. She says, there are numerous reasons. Let me read some of them to you.

- 1. Jesus calls us to be obedient.** As a disciple of Jesus Christ, you need to obey what Jesus said. John 14:15 quotes Jesus. He said, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*
- 2. Obedience is an act of worship.** You cannot earn your salvation by obedience, but you can express your gratitude for your salvation by obedience. Romans 12:1 says, *Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice."*
- 3. God rewards obedience.** That is a constant theme in the Bible. Luke 11:28 says, *"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it."*
- 4. Obedience to God proves love.** 2 John 6 says, *"And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands."*
- 5. Obedience to God demonstrates our faith.** Your obedience is part of your personal evangelism. 1 John 1:3-4 says, *"We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, 'I know him but does not keep his commands is a liar."*

This is the bottom line. If you want to be part of the Kingdom of God, then you must obey. If you think you can remember that, say, **"Amen!"** Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.

When I was about five years old, my family got our first dog. She was a black miniature dachshund by the name of Jenny. I believe they got her because my Uncle Bob and Aunt Phyllis had two miniature dachshunds, Heidi and Fritz. They were great dogs. They loved everyone. Jenny wasn't a great dog. She hated nearly everyone. She hated children, including me. She bit me and my friends regularly. She hated all men, including my grandfather. She growled at him the entire time he was in our home. She hated everyone who was in the room when she was eating. She once bit a family friend during mealtime. The woman got mad. She bit the vet during her annual visits, so we had to tranquilize her. She wanted to maim the mailman daily. At some point, my parents decided to take her to obedience school. They wanted to teach her the basic commands, sit, heel, and bark on command. It didn't go well. During the final exam, she bit the instructor. I believe, she is the only dog in the county to fail obedience school. In the end, her sparkling personality was her demise. That is another story for another day. However, Jenny was not dumb. Jenny loved my mother and my mother loved her. My mother defended the dog's poor behavior for years. This is the truth. Despite all the biting, we loved Jenny because she was our dog. This is equally true. We

loved her but we never trusted her. How could you? She was disobedient and may have been the world's worst dog.

What does my childhood family dog, Jenny, have to do Lord's Prayer? You are more like a miniature black dachshund of yesterday than you think. Just think about it for a moment. We loved our disobedient dog, but we never trusted her. In the end, she was the one who missed out. In the same way, God loves His disobedient people, but He can't trust them. How obedient are you to God's will? Maybe this is a better question. Can God trust you? In the end, the disobedient miss out. Joyce Meyer wasn't wrong. She once said, "*Obedience to God is the pathway to the life you really want to live.*" And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**" Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.