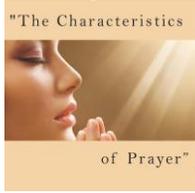

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 6. Today we continue in our sermon series: “The Characteristics of Prayer.”



We are in the 3rd message of this 6-week series where we're looking at what is called THE MODEL PRAYER or The LORD'S PRAYER. So far we've looked at the:

The Characteristics of Prayer:

1. The Purpose of Prayer
 2. The Worship of Prayer
 3. The Priority of Prayer
 4. The Provision of Prayer
 5. Forgiveness and Prayer
 6. The Protection of Prayer
-

We've learned the ultimate purpose of prayer is for much more than just asking for stuff. The purpose of prayer is that we might have communion with our Father in heaven. And as we learned last week, He is indeed that...our Father...our Pater...our Papa in heaven. Our Abba-Daddy and we are to live our lives in such a way that we reverence and respect His name as Holy. Look with me again at verse 9.

Matthew 6:9

9 “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

God is holy and we are to be holy and we show that we're respecting His name by how we live. “Hallowing His name,” means that God is on display in me for the world to see. Remember the ultimate goal of our lives:

1 Corinthians 10:31

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Today we are going to move into the next statement of this Model Prayer. Look at verse 10.

Matthew 6:10

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

Today we are going to look at the Kingdom of God. In fact, today's message could really be titled, “The Meaning of Life,” because this message really sums up why we exist. This single phrase of Scripture could be used as a summary statement to describe the existence of mankind. Today we are going to talk about God's Kingdom. Not your kingdom. Not my kingdom. Not the Magic Kingdom. But, God's kingdom. Jesus said:

Matthew 6:10

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

Now as we continue moving forward in studying this Model Prayer...these principles being taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount of how we should pray are so deep and so profound, that if we aren't careful because of their familiarity, we'll run right past them. We arrive to verse 10 and this verse stopped me dead in my tracks. Why? Because the truth is... when I'm praying, I seldom pray for God's kingdom to come. I'm praying for my kingdom to come! I'm praying for my ship to come in! And it honestly seems that 90% of my praying is all about me. But, there is no "my" in verse 10. We only see the word "your" TWICE, which represents our Heavenly Father.

Yet, the truth is for most of us, when we pray, we rush into the presence of Almighty God simply to unload our list of needs and concerns. I guess it's human nature, because we all have a bent toward ourselves. It's kind of like a baby...



This little guy is going to keep crying until he gets what he wants! Period! A baby knows nothing about thinking of someone else. That little guy is going to scream until his needs are met. A baby understands one thing: me, me, me! Oftentimes that's how we pray. We're like a child that thinks only of our wants. Yet, Jesus instructs us before we start asking for our daily bread (that's next week), and all our stuff...we should honor God's name and pray for the advancement of His kingdom. And that goes against what comes naturally to us!

So, what does Jesus mean when He says: KINGDOM. What does He mean?

Matthew 6:10

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

You see, we think of kingdoms and we often think of this...



The Magic Kingdom! Disneyworld! Or this...



Yes, when we think of kingdom, it's easy to think about castles, and maidens, and knights and forts and high walls and moats. We think of land and people riding horses, and all the pomp and ceremony. And all that's true...but, it makes it hard to think about a kingdom in any other way. That's why Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You a king?" Remember that scene...



Jesus is standing there beaten and in chains and Pilate looked at Him and said, "You gotta be kidding me...you're a king!" How did Jesus reply?

John 18:36

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

So, what is Jesus talking about and what does He mean by the word: KINGDOM?

Kingdom (Greek: basileia):

1 royal power, dominion, rule, reign

2 of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah

3 of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom

Now here's what's interesting...if we take the first definition and use the word: "R-E-I-G-N," in place of kingdom...(which is allowed by definition), we could translate the verse from "Your Kingdom Come" to "Your REIGN come..." And wouldn't that be a beautiful way to see what Jesus is describing here in how we should pray? It simply means Christ rules. Jesus kingdom **today**, doesn't have walls, and castles, and moats, and knights, and fair maidens, and all of that. No His kingdom today is found in the hearts of men and women and boys and girls who have accepted Him and His reign over their hearts. But one day, a literal kingdom is coming. More on that shortly.

But, for now... the priority of our praying should simply be: **To honor our Father in heaven and pray for His kingdom to come!**

Okay...so if that's the priority...then, let's look at our praying. How are we praying? When you pray, in what context are your requests? Are they with Jesus' kingdom in mind? Or yours? When you are praying for instance, for the Lord to help your finances, is it to get more stuff, so you can buy more and have more, or is it to benefit and profit His kingdom? When you pray about a problem or

difficult situation you're having...have you thought about how the Lord might use that problem to bring Him glory? Remember what we learned...

1 Corinthians 10:31

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

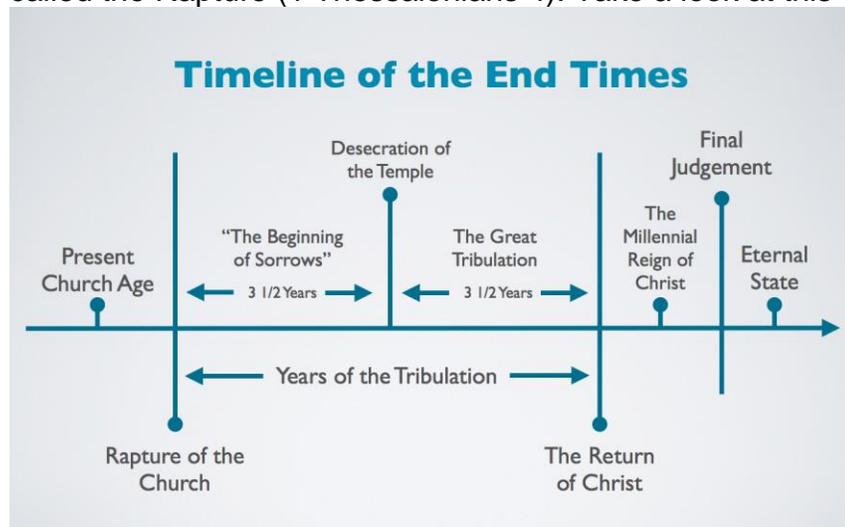
And that includes our praying! **Turn in your Bibles to Colossians, chapter 1.** I want you to see how all that we know is going to culminate into Christ's kingdom. It's been said that: "All of history is Christ's story." And I agree! It's all about Him! You see, church family...everything in the universe rises and falls with Jesus. He is the reason we even exist. Eventually, this whole thing is going to wind down and those who are born again followers of Jesus Christ are going to rule and reign with Him.

Colossians 1:15-20

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus is preeminent. Do you know what that means? It means He is over all things and above all things! He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is over the entire universe and one day His kingdom is going to come on this earth. Do you know what that is called in Scripture? It's the Millennial Kingdom and is known as the Millennial Reign.

You see, for 1,000 years, Jesus Christ is going to rule and reign on this earth. The Bible speaks of this reign in Revelation, chapter 20. You see, one day...and it could happen any day, Jesus is coming back in the air...in the sky and He's going to take His church, the bride off the earth...that's called the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4). Take a look at this chart:



You see, we are living in what is known as the "Present Church Age." But, one day, Jesus is going to take His followers off this earth in what is called "The Rapture of the Church." **After that**, there will be 7 years of "Tribulation" and great trouble on this earth. But, a man called the Anti-Christ, led by Satan will come and seek

to make a false peace on this earth and set-up his kingdom. You see, that's what Satan has wanted all along. He's wanted to rule and reign (he wanted it in heaven, but he couldn't have it so God kicked him out), and for a brief period of time, he'll have his shot.

But at the end of the 7 years of Tribulation, Jesus will come back and step foot on this earth again on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, which is the same place from which He ascended into heaven after His resurrection. And it's that point that the Bible tells us in Zechariah 14 that Jesus will set up His throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years and Jesus will keep His promise to the nation of Israel to rule and reign on the throne of David and that reign will ultimately culminate in His eternal reign.

Now why do I tell you all of this? Because I want you to know this: All of life begins and ends with Jesus! It all comes down to His kingdom. Can you see that? Does that put your life into perspective?

You know things are crazy aren't they? Look at the political scene in the United States right now. What a mess. Look at the tumult and upheaval in the world. ISIS on the march... Iran wanting to wipe Israel off the map... Putin on the march. North Korea armed and ready and CRAZY!

But church family...it's always been this way. Think about it. Christian Scholars tell us there have been around 21 Great Civilizations on this earth since the world began and they've all come and gone.

Think about it...Egypt came and went, Assyria came and went. The Babylonian Empire came and went. The Medo-Persian Empire came and went. Rome came and went. Alexander the Great and his empire came and went. And you know what if the Lord doesn't return for another 100 years, I predict that the United States will come and go as well. This country is 240 years old and most great empires last only 200 years and so we're overdue.

Does that worry you?

Listen...if you were to draw a line from one end of this stage to the other and list all the great civilizations and nations and kingdoms that have ever existed on this earth, you can put the United States on there right now, but folks...if the line keeps moving and Jesus doesn't return, based on the trajectory we're on...we are going to go the way of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Rome. But, do you understand, Jesus' kingdom is not tied up with the United States. His kingdom is bigger than any nation.

Listen, this world is not our home and Jesus is bigger than the United States. People ask me all the time what's going to happen to America? What's going to happen to our country? My answer is simple...we're going to pass away. Try as you might as you look to Scripture and as you look at the end time events...there is no mention of the United States. In fact there is no mention of any nation in the western hemisphere.

You see, nations come and go because of sin.

Proverbs 14:34

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

You see, we have abandoned God in this country and we're going to pay the price. We already are. We have abandoned the biblical standards and morality our country was founded on and so we are now sliding down on the backside of our greatness. All kingdoms have gone the way of sin and the flesh; descending into moral decay and distress and inevitable destruction. And if the Lord tarries His coming, it'll happen to America too. That's where we're headed. But listen, this is the key point of the message for us as American Christians. The issue is not America; the issue is the Kingdom of God, and His cause...which is to bring people into the saving knowledge of His son...that's to be our concern...that's to be our priority when we pray. Do you see that?

Listen to church family, I love this country...I really do...I love it so deeply and I'm so grateful that the Lord allowed me to be born here...the greatest nation (outside of God's chosen people) that's ever existed. Consider that thought for a moment... God allowed you and me to be born...for such a time as this... in the greatest nation this world has ever known. But folks, I'll say it one last time...the United States is NOT the kingdom we should be living for! No!

Matthew 6:10

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

You see, it's God's kingdom that must be in focus...not the United States and certainly not MY KINGDOM. Now, does that mean I've given up on the United States? No way! Not by a long shot... As long as there is breath in me, I'm going to continue to fight for the cause of Christ in this nation. I'm going to continue to bring His light to this nation as best as I can. But, I'm not going to lose perspective and I'm not going to go into a deep depression if Hillary Clinton wins the White House or if the stock market drops 5000 points. Because if I do...then, I'm declaring that I'm really not about God's Kingdom...I'm about my little kingdom and my little pleasures...and my money...and my stuff. And that's not honoring God's name. I'd be taking His name in vain. "Hallowed be thy name."

Do you see how this prayer of Jesus forces us to constantly refocus our priorities? It forces us to ask, before we start asking for our daily bread and our stuff, if I'm really interested in God's kingdom. Am I desiring what's best for His Kingdom...to bring glory to His name...my heavenly Father? You see that's the issue and that's what Jesus is saying and He goes one more step further...He goes to the **will**...

Matthew 6:10

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

What is God's will? Jesus said we are to pray that His will be done. What is God's will? Do you know? Well, Bible Scholars categorize God's will into two categories? His #1 **Perfect (Ultimate) Will** and His #2 **Permissive Will**.

Let me briefly explain these and I think it will make sense. We know that God is sovereign. He is in total control of all of life. He is omniscient and nothing takes Him by surprise...He is never frustrated. Nothing happens beyond His control. His ultimate will cannot and will not be thwarted! We can take comfort in knowing our Heavenly Father is in total control. And you know what, there are times that we'll pray and we ask for the Lord to do something in our lives and YET, because it's not part of His **Perfect Will**, He will refuse because He knows better.

And since we don't know if something is His Perfect Will, that's why we pray. We come to our

heavenly Father and we ASK...yes...we should ASK...but, we ultimately pray, "Your will be done Lord...you know best."

And you see, there are other times that we pray, and God, in His **Permissive Will**, answers our request. We all know that we have not because we ask not. So, we ask like Abraham did.

Remember in Genesis 18, when God told Abraham He was going to destroy Sodom and Abraham said, "Lord, if it could be your will don't destroy it if there be just 50 righteous people." And God said, "Okay." But, then Abraham got thinking about it and said...hmm...maybe just 45...then 40...then 30...then 20...then 10.

And God answered each time and permitted Abraham's request. Problem is: Abraham didn't go low enough. He should have said 3. Because that's all that made it out...just Lot and his two daughters. But, the point is that God answered Abraham's request in His PERMISSIVE WILL.

You say, "How do we know if something is God's Perfect Will or His Permissive Will when we pray?" Well, the truth is we don't know...not initially and that's why we come and we ask. But, we do so with the overriding theme of our prayer being this:

Matthew 6:10

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

But church, we shouldn't pray, "Your will be done" and do so in such a way that we don't exhibit faith. You see, I'm afraid many of us pray and then we tack on the end of our prayer "your will be done, Lord" and we excuse away all faith. Don't do that! I promise that was not Jesus' intention when He said to pray "Your will be done." Yes, pray for God's will to be accomplished...pray that His priorities take precedent over ours...but, don't stop having faith!

Unfortunately, there are some Christians who believe and some pastors that teach, "Well, God's will is going to be done no matter what...It's all settled... He's going to do what He wants to do, so don't worry about praying hard...with intensity or passion!"

Well, that's flat out wrong and you know it. James, the half-brother of Jesus said in James 5:16: "The effectual fervent prayer (white hot) of a righteous man (person) avails much!"

Listen...we aren't beggars...because of Jesus we can come boldly to the throne of God.

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Come to His throne boldly! Ask...ask...ask... He wants to pray... But, allow the umbrella of that prayer to be "Your Will Be Done..." You know what's best!

And this brings us back where we started. Church, don't fret and get depressed about America. Keep praying for our nation and our leaders...but don't forget, the UNITED STATES as a nation is

not what we're living for! We are not part of the Kingdom of America...we are part of the family of God...the KINGDOM OF GOD.

You know tonight we'll be doing the dress rehearsal for the Passion Play and next weekend we'll be doing it Saturday night and Sunday night and Sunday morning. And I want to show you my favorite scene. I believe this is from the 2011 Play.



I call it the **“White Robe Scene.”**

It's my favorite scene because it's the scene in heaven where we will worship Jesus in all His majesty, power and glory! We will have come into His KINGDOM! And it will be the consummation of all things in the universe!

Now let me ask you: Will you be a part of that? Are you part of His kingdom...His family? You see, while on this earth, Jesus constantly said: “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And dear people, the only way you can be part of His kingdom is to REPENT! You must repent and call on His name.

And if you will do that, you get to call Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe, your Father... and you get to be part of the greatest kingdom ever known...better than Egypt...better than Rome! God's Kingdom. **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**