

TOUCHING HEAVEN, CHANGING EARTH

If God Already Knows, Why Pray?

Prayer, Alignment, Providence, and the Kingdom of God

By Pastor Shane

Matthew 6:8-10 KJV - *"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him...Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."*

OVERARCHING TRUTH: Prayer is not primarily man's attempt to move God toward our will. Prayer is communion with God that brings us into alignment with His will, so surrendered people can participate in bringing His Kingdom and purposes into expression on the earth.

THE QUESTION BENEATH THE QUESTION

- If God is omniscient, prayer cannot be primarily about giving Him information.
- If God is sovereign, prayer cannot be a technique for controlling Him.
- If God is immutable, prayer cannot mean persuading Him to become wiser, kinder, or more willing.
- So the deeper question is not, 'How do I get God to do what I want?' It is, 'How do I come into agreement with what God wills?'

KEY SHIFT: Prayer is not getting heaven to agree with earth. Prayer brings earth into agreement with heaven.

1. PRAYER BEGINS WITH REVELATION

Matthew 6:9-10 KJV *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done..."*

- Before Jesus teaches us to say, 'Give us,' He teaches us to say, 'Thy kingdom' and 'Thy will.' The order matters.
- Mature prayer begins by turning our attention from our agenda toward God's character, rule, and intention.
- Prayer asks more than, 'God, how can I get You involved in what I am doing?' It asks, 'Father, what are You doing, and how do I become involved in it?'

John 5:19 KJV *"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do..."*

POWER THOUGHT: Prayer is where I stop asking God to bless my agenda long enough to discover His.

2. REVELATION MUST BECOME ALIGNMENT

Luke 22:42 KJV *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."*

- Gethsemane may be the clearest picture of the purpose of prayer. Jesus enters prayer expressing a real desire, yet He remains until desire is fully surrendered to the Father's will.
- The cup did not disappear. The circumstances did not change. The surrendered obedience of the Son stood firm.
- Prayer is therefore not always where God changes what is around us. Often it is where our will is brought into holy agreement with what God is doing.

REVELATION: Gethsemane did not remove the cross. Gethsemane revealed the surrendered vessel who would carry it.

POWER THOUGHT: Prayer does not merely prepare the answer for us. Prayer prepares us for the answer.

3. ALIGNMENT CREATES AVAILABILITY

- Once the will is aligned, the life becomes available.
- God wills salvation, yet somebody preaches. God wills generosity, yet somebody gives. God wills reconciliation, yet somebody forgives. God wills harvest, yet somebody labors.
- The sovereign God does not need our permission to be sovereign, but He repeatedly chooses surrendered human beings as vessels of His activity.

Matthew 9:38 KJV *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."*

- Then Matthew 10 opens with Jesus calling and sending the Twelve. The men told to pray for laborers become laborers themselves.

SHOCKING THOUGHT: Sometimes we enter prayer asking God to send an answer and leave prayer discovering that God intends to send us as part of the answer.

4. AVAILABILITY BECOMES PARTICIPATION

- This is where prayer and providence meet. God not only ordains ends; He can also ordain the means by which those ends are accomplished.

- God gives harvest, yet seed and labor matter. God defeats Goliath, yet David releases the stone. God spreads the Gospel, yet people preach.
- Theologically, these are often called secondary causes: real created means through which God's providential purposes are carried out.
- Prayer can function in the same way. God may will not only that something happen, but that it happen through the prayers, obedience, and participation of His people.

THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT: Prayer is not a loophole in sovereignty. Prayer can be one of sovereignty's instruments.

CENTRAL REVELATION: Some things God eternally wills to do, He eternally wills to do through prayer.

5. THE PROMISE CAN BECOME THE PRAYER

Daniel 9:2-3 KJV

- Daniel reads Jeremiah and understands that Jerusalem's desolation is appointed for seventy years.
- If divine sovereignty made prayer unnecessary, Daniel could have closed the scroll. Instead, he sets his face toward God in prayer, fasting, confession, and supplication.
- Daniel does not pray to invent God's will. He prays because God's revealed will has given his intercession direction.

POWER REVELATION: The prophecy did not eliminate prayer. The prophecy produced prayer.

- Prayer can therefore be the place where revelation becomes agreement and agreement becomes participation.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE: Some realities exist in God's intention before they exist in human experience. Prayer positions the believer in agreement with heaven as God's will is worked out on earth.

6. OMNISCIENCE DOES NOT MAKE PRAYER MEANINGLESS

Matthew 6:8 KJV *"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."*

- God does not learn when we pray. He does not acquire facts, discover emergencies, or update His understanding.
- Yet Jesus places the Father's prior knowledge beside the command to pray. Therefore, God's knowledge is not an argument against prayer.

- Knowledge and causation are different categories. God's knowing that an event will occur does not mean the real actions within that event are meaningless.
- His knowledge can include the prayer, the answer, the choices involved, and the entire causal history connecting them.

MESMERIZING THOUGHT: The prayer you pray tomorrow is not new information to God tomorrow, yet from your place inside history it can still be a real act with real consequences.

POWER REVELATION: Your prayer does not surprise the God who knows the future. Your prayer may be one of the instruments God has always known within the future He governs.

7. PRAYER IS COMMUNION BEFORE IT IS TRANSACTION

- If prayer were merely transferring information, the prayer life of Jesus would make little sense.
- Jesus prayed at His baptism, before choosing the Twelve, at the Transfiguration, before Lazarus was raised, in Gethsemane, and on the cross.
- The Son's prayer life reveals prayer as relationship: communion, dependence, love, obedience, listening, and surrender.
- The Psalms likewise show people deliberately opening fear, grief, praise, confession, longing, and trust before the God who already knows.

POWER THOUGHT: Prayer is the finite mind intentionally turning toward the Infinite Mind.

REVELATION: Prayer is not merely the language of human need. In Jesus, prayer becomes the language of relationship.

8. PRAYER CHANGES US, BUT NOT ONLY US

James 5:17-18 KJV

- Prayer changes motives, desires, priorities, spiritual perception, and the posture of the will.
- But Scripture refuses to reduce prayer to psychology. Elijah prayed and events outside Elijah changed.
- The biblical claim is not that prayer mechanically controls outcomes. It is that God has given prayer a genuine place within His dealings with the world.

POWER THOUGHT: Prayer changes the pray-er, and the aligned pray-er becomes available for God to change things through.

9. DOES PRAYER CHANGE GOD?

Exodus 32:14 KJV *"And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."*

- Moses' intercession, Hezekiah's prayer, and Nineveh's repentance all portray genuine divine-human interaction.
- This does not require God to gain information or change His character. Historic Christian theology distinguishes God's unchanging nature from His real relations with changing creatures.
- The same holy God can judge rebellion and extend mercy toward repentance without becoming a different God.

ILLUSTRATION: The same sun melts ice and hardens clay. The sun need not change for the object standing in relation to it to experience a different effect.

THEOLOGICAL BALANCE: An unchanging God can genuinely respond to changing people without becoming a changing God.

10. PRAYER IS NEITHER FATALISM NOR MANIPULATION

- Fatalism says, 'If God is sovereign, nothing I do matters.'
- Manipulation says, 'If I discover the correct formula, I can make God do what I want.'
- Biblical prayer rejects both. We cannot control God, but neither are we meaningless spectators.
- Prayer is surrendered participation: 'Thy will be done in earth,' not 'My will be done in heaven.'

POWER THOUGHT: Magic tries to manipulate God. Fatalism refuses to engage God. Prayer communes, aligns, surrenders, and cooperates with God.

THE MOVEMENT OF PRAYER

THE PATTERN: REVELATION -> ALIGNMENT -> SURRENDER -> AVAILABILITY -> PARTICIPATION -> MANIFESTATION

- REVELATION: I discern the heart and will of God.

- **ALIGNMENT:** My thinking and desires come into agreement with His.
- **SURRENDER:** I release the demand that God must fulfill my agenda.
- **AVAILABILITY:** I become willing to obey, go, speak, give, forgive, wait, or act.
- **PARTICIPATION:** God allows my prayer and obedience to become meaningful within His providence.
- **MANIFESTATION:** What is in the heart and will of God finds expression in the earth according to His wisdom and purpose.

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

DEFINITION: Prayer is communion with God that produces alignment with God, so that surrendered people can participate with God in bringing His will, His purposes, and His Kingdom into expression on the earth.

- Prayer is not informing God. It is encountering God.
- Prayer is not bending God's will toward mine. It is surrendering my will toward His.
- Prayer is not passive resignation. Alignment produces availability, and availability produces obedience.
- Prayer is not merely asking for the Kingdom. Prayer prepares Kingdom people through whom the King can work.

FINAL REVELATION:

God does not need my prayer to know what should happen. He invites me to pray so that I can know His heart, surrender my will, and become available to His purpose. I am not touching heaven to make God agree with earth. I am touching heaven until earth, beginning with me, comes into agreement with heaven.

THE QUESTION: If the sovereign God of the universe has chosen to include surrendered people and their prayers in the unfolding of His purposes, how could we afford not to pray?

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 6:8-10 | Matthew 9:35-10:8 | John 5:19 | Luke 22:39-46 | Daniel 9:1-23 | James 4:2-3 | James 5:16-18 | Exodus 32:7-14 | 2 Kings 20:1-6 | Jonah 3:5-10 | John 11:41-42 | Romans 8:26-27 | 1 John 5:14-15