

GROWING — Empowered to Pray II

How can we pray in the midst of where we stand today? Last week, we looked at what it looks like to move from maintenance prayer to Kingdom focused prayer. We were created to pray out of a place of security, acceptance, and relationship.

Matthew 6:9 - 13

This, then, is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

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

The New International Version. (2011). (Mt 6:9–13). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

We looked at moving off of *solely* praying about ourselves, but declaring God's uniqueness, his otherness, and honoring him.



But what does it mean to pray God's Kingdom down into the earth?

Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done

On earth, as it is in heaven

As Jesus began his ministry, you would most likely hear him proclaiming these words:

The Kingdom has come near! Repent and believe the good news!

The moment that humanity has been waiting for since the beginning of time was for when the Creator would turn the world back to what it originally was when it was created.

Jesus' cry was for people to repent and join the new kingdom that was invading earth. Whoever repents and joins his kingdom would be a place where heaven and earth are joined and become a holy, unique, other space where God's love and blessing would extend to the nations.

Wherever God's kingdom is, there his life and blessing are. There his shalom rests.

Wherever God's kingdom isn't, there is darkness, injustice, and curses. There is no shalom.



There is this longing in the human heart, whether you believe in God or not, for things to be made right because we know things are not as they should be.

That is why Jesus wants us to pray his kingdom rule down into the places where we currently don't see it happening.

Through our praying, we partner with God to bring his rule into the earth.

Destroying Chaos

Genesis 1:1 - 2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ge 1:1-2). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

In the beginning, God's creation was full of darkness and chaos. There are forces of chaos that opposed his creation. But he reigns in the chaos with his words and brings about order.

God creates a paradise in the midst of a contested Kingship. Powers are already working against this king, but in the middle of this war zone, God chooses to create humanity as his royal representatives to continue his work of destroying chaos and bringing about order.



We do this first through partnership with prayer. We pray his light into darkness, his order into chaos, his shalom where there is no peace. **That is who you are.**

When you do this, you fulfill your rightful duty as an image-bearer of God. Your prayers are accepting his invitation.

Praying Starts In My Darkness

God, would you bring your light into my darkness, and bring your order within me? Thy kingdom come in my heart as it is in heaven.

You can pray this because the Snake-Crusher prophesied in Genesis 3:15 has defeated death and struck down darkness and done for us infinitely more than we could even imagine. He restored the possibility for you to be a new creation.

Allegiance



If you accept his invitation to surrender to his kingdom, you now have a role to play in restoring creation back to Eden 2.0. You are an agent of cosmic restoration for all of creation with Jesus as your King.

If you haven't given your allegiance toward him, every passing second brings another chance for you to reconsider whether your own rule brings about life and human flourishing.

Jesus' message was that your own rule will only accomplish more death and chaos, and continues to invite you to surrender and repent.

Isaiah modeled for each of us what this looks like:

Isaiah 6:1 - 8

I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

“Woe to me!” I cried. ***“I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”***

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, **“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”**

And I said, **“Here am I. Send me!”**

The New International Version. (2011). (Is 6:1–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Darkness In Me

For some reason, we have this notion engrained in us that God can't handle our darkness, or that God doesn't want to see it.

But in Isaiah's confession of having unclean lips (*think Proverbs: whatever comes out of your lips is an overflow from what is in your heart*), we see God permitting him in his presence and a holy being rushing toward him to burn away his dark heart.

The darkness is not a problem for God, and nor is it a problem for King Jesus.

King David knew this, even before King Jesus:

Psalm 139:1 - 6

**You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.**

You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 139:1–6). Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan.

King David gets it. He understand that God sees everything. And whether he is uncomfortable and wants to get away from God, or doubts God's guiding presence, he affirms from his heart that God will be with him, even in the grave:

Psalm 139:7 - 12

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths [Sheol, the underworld], you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"

**even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you**

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 139:7–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Darkness cannot hide you and chaos cannot wall God back from you. God does his greatest work in the dark. We already talked about God creating the universe in the darkness and chaos; nothing can restrain him from working in the darkest moments of your life.

Psalm 139:13 - 17

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

**My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.**

Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, e God!
How vast is the sum of them!

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 139:13–17). Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan.

God can see your details in your darkness. He is the **God who sees** (Genesis 16:13).

It Starts With You & Me



I can't pray light into darkness out there if I'm not praying into my life right now. I can export if I don't allow God to import.

Only you can welcome God's rule, his shalom, and his light into your chaos and darkness.

Pray his Kingdom Come in you as it is in heaven. Pray, God, "rule me."

Invite God into your fear, your pain, your anger, your lust, your struggles. We don't pray last, we pray first and invite God into our mess.

Only then can we turn around and say to God,

"Here am I. Send me. Send me to bring light into the darkness. Send me, I'll join you bring order out of chaos with you. Take me with you."