

TEACH US TO PRAY THROUGH SUBMISSION

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By Pastor Stan

Matthew 6:10

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INTRO.

-- Our vision at North Center is to glorify God by making disciples. A diagram called "The Disciple's Cross" helps us to understand what it means to be a disciple.

-- Each year we put a special emphasis on one of the aspects of discipleship illustrated in this diagram. For 2015 the emphasis is on prayer. I'm starting this journey of growing in prayer with a series based on "The Lord's Prayer," which is in Matthew 6 (p. 811). We call it the Lord's Prayer because the Lord Jesus is the one who gave it to us. We could also call it the Disciple's Prayer because the Lord Jesus gave it to all of His disciples as a model to teach us how to pray.

Cf., Matthew 6:9-15

-- Something that we ought to notice immediately about this prayer is how vastly different it is from what most of our prayers. When most of us pray, what is the thing that we primarily do? Ask God to do something for us - to help us or to give us something. In other words, our prayers are primarily self-focused. We pray to God, but we are praying about ourselves. The Lord's Prayer is a stark contrast to that kind of praying. What Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer is that true prayer is God-focused. True prayer is not only to God but is about God.

The first half of the Lord's Prayer is all about God. The first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer concern God - His name, His kingdom, His will. Last week we looked at the first of those petitions, the petition about God's name.

v. 9b, "hallowed be your name."

Jesus tells us that that's how we are to start our praying - focusing on God's name, asking that it "be hallowed," that it be set apart and kept holy, that it be treasured, revered and exalted. Jesus is telling us that our first and foremost desire is not our needs but God's glory.

-- That's the first petition - that's where all true prayer must begin. Now, today, let's look at the next two petitions, which, along with the first petition, are inseparably bound to one another.

v. 10

I. The Petitions Concerning God's Kingdom and God's Will (v. 10)

A. "Your kingdom come"

1. God's Kingdom was the central theme in Jesus ministry.

-- **Matthew 4:17, 23** From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ... ²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom....

-- Then in chapters 5-7 Jesus gives the Sermon on the Mount, in which He teaches about life in God's Kingdom, the life of discipleship, how those who have entered into God's Kingdom are to live.

Cf., **6:33a** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...

2. This petition for God's Kingdom to come has two important implications.

a. The first implication is that God is sovereign. He is sovereign over all that exists, both seen and unseen, sovereign over heaven and earth. He is the Creator of all and the Lord over all. In Revelation 4, John has a vision of God is seated on the throne of Heaven and is being worshipped by awesome heavenly beings, and as they worship Him they proclaim:

Rev. 4:11 Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

b. The second implication of the prayer for God's Kingdom to come is that God's

kingdom has not yet reached its final state of completion. Some have described it this way: that there are "already" and "not yet" aspects to God's Kingdom.

(1) God's Kingdom has already begun. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins His earthly ministry with this declaration:

Mark 1:14b-15 Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and

-- God's Kingdom was inaugurated in Jesus' First Advent, when He came to earth in human form to provide for our salvation through His death and Resurrection. When Jesus returned to Heaven He left on earth another body through which He continues the work of the Kingdom - the body called the Church. Right now, it is the Church that is the Kingdom of God - God reigns over the Church. Those who have repented and believed in Jesus are the ones who have already entered into God's Kingdom.

(2) But there is also a "not yet" aspect to God's Kingdom. The Kingdom of God has already started but is not yet fully established. We see that in the continuation of John's vision of the throne room of Heaven in Revelation 5. In chapter 4 John sees God the Father, and in the next chapter he sees God the Son, pictured as the Lamb of God who has died and risen again to redeem sinners.

Rev. 5:6-10 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.... **7** And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. **8** And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, **10** and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

-- We see both the "already" and the "not yet" aspects of God's Kingdom here in verse 10. Christ has already made us a kingdom; God is already reigning over us. But He is not yet reigning over all the earth. Satan is still deceiving and leading much of humanity in rebellion against God. But one day that will end - one day there will be a Second Advent - one day Jesus will return and will reign not only in Heaven but also on earth. One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. One day His Kingdom will come. As Isaac Watts has written in his great hymn:

Jesus shall reign where ere the sun
Doth its successive journey run.
His Kingdom stretched from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.