

Praying; “Thy Kingdom Come...”

Introduction:

Luke 11:1

¹Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

²So He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Our Father [£]in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

[£]**Your will be done**

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

³ Give us day by day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,

[£]But deliver us from the evil one.”

- This prayer that we sometimes call the “**our father**” is not a prayer to be repeated mindlessly in hope that it would be answered. Jesus is teaching us how to pray not what to pray. In other words he is showing us the essential elements of prayer. E.g. the “our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” = worship element in our prayer.
- Today I want to focus on the “**Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...**”

Before we can pray Thy Kingdom Come we need to know what exactly we are praying for. We know that **God’s kingdom is where God rules.**

Where does God rule? We know that God rules in **heaven**. We also know He can rule in our **hearts**, and He can also rule **wherever** I implement his rule whether it is in my business, my family or my campus.

So when we are praying Thy Kingdom come, we are praying that the rule and reign of God will be established in the hearts of men and woman and that we would see more families, businesses, universities and governments come under his rule and reign.

Now if I were to pray for the university to come under God’s reign what could I expect? Will one day I wake up and this campus be completely reformed? The answer is no, let’s go to a passage of scripture that explains this better:

Luke 17:20

²⁰Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹nor will they say, [£]‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

→ Jesus highlights here the process by which God’s kingdom is established on the earth: It works first internally and then externally:

- **Firstly**, we go through the process of salvation and when that happens God deposits in us his Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit gets to work straight away in us and transforms our inner thoughts and motives until our inner man is under the Lordship of God. We are not just thinking the way the world thinks, we not motivated by worldly things, every part of us is saturated with God’s thoughts, with God’s ideas and we are motivated by the things of God, we care about the things God cares about.
- **Secondly**, as we begin to live out the rule of God in our families, friendships and businesses we are now beginning to establish God’s kingdom on the earth. This is what Jesus said in **Matthew 12:28** *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

Now you understand all those images Jesus had to describe the kingdom of God. He said: *"The kingdom is like leaven in some dough..."* *"The kingdom is like a mustard seed..."* = = it starts as a small insignificant deposit, but eventually influences everything around it.

Now the next question we need answered before we can fully understand this phrase "thy kingdom come..." is: **When that kingdom has come what does it look like?**

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...

→ So when God's kingdom has come into my life the end result is that I am living **righteously**, I walk in God's **peace**, God's **joy** and the **Holy Spirit** is my leader. Likewise if God's kingdom has really come to my university from the top leadership to the students everything and everyone is walking righteously, in peace, joy and the Holy Spirit is evident.

Many people understand this element of prayer to be called '**intercession**' or '**standing in the gap**.' And that is exactly what it is. It is positioning ourselves between God and this lost world and through the use of prayer beginning to declare this world to be changed.

Illustration: Take a battery and a light bulb and connect the two with a piece of wood = nothing happens. But if I take a wire and connect the two, the light goes on! This is what we do in intercession we connect ourselves to God and this lost world and act as a channel for his kingdom to flow into this world.

I define the prayer of intercession as:

Intercession is seeing the God future and then beginning to persevere in prayer until the fulfilment of that future and usually in the process we become the prayer.

- **Seeing the God future**
- **Perseverance**
- **Becoming the prayer**

1. Seeing the God future:

In order for us to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come' we first need to catch a vision of what God's rule and reign would be like. We need to catch even just a glimpse of what God has planned for our lives. And then allow that vision that glimpse of God's desire to captivate us and motivate us and burden us and control us and consume us to the point where we no longer exist but only the vision.

In life there are 2 distinct categories of people; those who:

- A) Make things happen and there are those who
- B) Wonder what happened

Most people unfortunately fall into the 'I wonder what happened' category... When God has invited us to work with Him to establish his rule and reign. You see as Christians we are not fatalists i.e. Believe that saying that says 'what will be will be.' That is not what the Bible teaches. It teaches that we have a choice either we can work with God to establish his kingdom on the earth or we can get on with our own thing, however, every time Christians choose not to participate in making history evil prospers. Like Francis Schaeffer said: "In order for evil to prosper, good men must do nothing."

Walter wink said:

- *"History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being."*
- *"Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the way of what God has promised."*
- *"Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces...and then acts as if that future is now irresistible, thus helping to create the reality for which it longs."*

For example: Some students who went on our national camp in **Bloemfontein** said: "This place is like heaven you can leave your cell phone and wallet on your bed and come back and it is still there!" They were absolutely amazed. Now until we have a similar situation right here on campus and in residence, we have not yet achieved Thy Kingdom Come. But it starts with somebody catching God's vision for a crime free campus and then labouring in prayer until the fulfilment of that vision.

For example: I have been captivated by a vision for a church on this campus.

Question: What vision from heaven has captivated your soul?

Note: some people actually don't know what to pray for... i.e. God's cause for the earth has not yet gripped their heart and consumed them.

2. Perseverance:

Most of us don't allow ourselves to see the future that God wants because we are so burdened by our present reality. We look at what we are, the little we have and how bad this world is, and how seemingly insurmountable the problems are and the gulf between the two paralyzes us into non-action. We roll over and say; well that's just the way it is.

The missing ingredient is faith. It takes faith to say:

- "It doesn't matter that I am white and can't speak Zulu – I'm gonna go..."
- "It doesn't matter if politics is entrenched with corrupt people – I believe God can raise up a new generation of leaders."

Once we have the faith that God all things are possible with God, that faith should drive us to our knees and begin to labour in prayer until that future is fulfilled.

- **Nehemiah** when he caught a vision of what Israel was meant to be in God's eyes and looked at what it had become, which was a pile of rubble, he got on his knees and began to pray and intercede and cry out to God. And the result was that the city was rebuilt.

In order for us to become intercessors we need to believe that the future can change no matter how bad the current situation is. After all it doesn't take much faith to perceive revival once you're actually in it! But to stand by the tiniest trickle of hope and hear the roar of a great Niagara: that takes faith.

The example of Elijah.

1 Kings 18:1-2

¹And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

²So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.

41-45

⁴¹Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." ⁴²So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, ⁴³and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

⁴⁴Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'"

⁴⁵Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain.

- vs 41 Elijah heard the sound of heavy rain. Did he hear this with his natural ears? No he heard this by faith in his spirit.
- vs 43 Elijah sent his servant seven times. I don't know about you, but I would be seriously discouraged after the third time there was no result. This passage of scripture is in the Bible to demonstrate to us the necessity of perseverance in prayer. He had the vision of what God wanted to do – rain in the time of drought. Most people were considering leaving the country and giving up. Elijah knew things could be different and he began to persist in prayer. He was on his knees claiming the promises of God.
- Now aren't we living in times of spiritual drought where the only things people ever talk about are the problems we are facing and everywhere you look there is this apathy and hopelessness? People wanting to leave this country and go somewhere else.

The future is not changed by reading the newspaper and hearing all the problems. The future is changed by being on our knees like Elijah and claiming the promises of God. I bet his head was down the whole time. He didn't even want to see the blue sky above him, because it would just discourage him – maybe that is why he kept sending his servant to look.

We need to have that same spiritual defiance that says I'm not even going to look at what is, I am only going to look at what is to come. I'm going to walk by faith and not by sight.

I suspect that this is one of the reasons why Jesus so often rose early and sought out isolation to pray. Like Elijah he needed time to listen to the mighty rain of God's promises. He knew that the day ahead would confront him with impossible situations, insoluble to the human mind. He needed first to tune in to the sights and sounds of heaven,

Billy Graham: *"The three keys for revival are prayer, prayer and prayer."*

Modern Example of persistence in prayer:

Duncan Campbell sat in the pulpit at a large Christian conference in Bangor, Ireland where he was the main speaker. Something began to stir in his spirit and he sensed an almost irresistible compulsion to leave the convention and fly to the tiny Hebridean island of Bernera. The inhabitants of Bernera numbered only about 500, less than the number attending the conference, and had been untouched by the recent revival on the larger islands nearby. But the compulsion in Duncan was too strong to ignore. He turned to the conference chairman and asked if he might be released to leave. The chairman refused, saying that he could not possibly excuse Duncan from delivering the final address. But Duncan pointed out that God was unlikely to anoint the sermon if he was calling him elsewhere, and the chairman reluctantly agreed.

Duncan flew from Ireland to Glasgow and then from Glasgow to Stornaway (capital of the Hebrides). From there he drove many miles north, finally crossing the waters to Bernera on the small ferry. At no point on the journey did he discuss his mission or reveal his identity to a single soul. Stepping ashore at Bernera he approached a boy and asked where the nearest minister lived. The boy replied that both of the island's churches were without ministers at that time. "Where then does the nearest church elder live?" Duncan inquired. "In the house on the top of the hill", indicated the lad. Duncan asked him to go and inform the elder that 'Mr. Campbell' has come to the island "and if he asks 'which Campbell' tell him, 'the Campbell who was on Lewis.'" The boy soon returned, out of breath, and even Duncan was startled by his reply, "**Mr. Mackinnen** has been expecting you. He has arranged for you to stay with his brother, and you are preaching in the church tonight."

A few days earlier, as Duncan sat in that pulpit in Bangor, **Hector MacKinnen, the island postman** had taken time off work to pray. He had become so disturbed by the spiritual ambivalence of his community that he committed the day to prayer in his barn. His wife recalled overhearing him pray for Duncan Campbell "*Oh God, I do not know where he is, but you know and I ask you to send him.*"

At 10 p.m. that evening, Hector 'broke through', that is, he received a sudden and certain conviction that his prayers had been answered. So sure was he that Duncan was coming upon the day in question that he arranged accommodation and notified the community that Mr. Campbell would be preaching the following Thursday at 9 p.m! Eighty people came to hear the visiting preacher that night, but nothing unusual happened. So ordinary was the meeting that Duncan even wondered whether he had mistaken God's call and should really have been preaching to the large numbers back in Bangor. But God was not responding to the faith of the renowned revival leader, but to that of a humble village postman who had received certainty from him in prayer.

The congregation left the building to make their way home, down the hill to the village below. Hector approached Duncan and sitting beside him said, "Mr. Campbell, I hope you are not disappointed that revival has not come to the church tonight, but God is hovering over us and he will break through at any minute." Suddenly Hector stopped short, stood up and slowly removed his hat. Gazing intently into the night he whispered, "Stand Mr. Campbell, for God has come. See what is happening." There below them on the hillside people were kneeling in the heather as loud cries of repentance began to fill the night air. The meeting, which had begun at 11 p.m. in the church continued until 4 in the morning on the hillside. The whole community was gripped by a "mighty visitation that shook the island from centre to circumference" and every single household was impacted that very night.

Andrew Murray (the art of intercession)

"Heaven is still full of blessings as it was in the days of Elijah and in the days of Jesus – and God still seeks to give to those that ask him, who give their lives to prayer. Prayer is the appointed means for drawing down these heavenly blessings in power on ourselves and those around us."

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours (Mark 11²⁴)

This true life story is just the same as Elijah's story. I wonder how much of our praying simply stops short of breakthrough?

The example of the disciples praying in the upper room:

The disciples 'joined together constantly in prayer' (Acts 1¹⁴) right up to the moment when the Spirit came at Pentecost. They remembered that Jesus had told them to remain in Jerusalem until the promised 'baptism with the Holy Spirit' and because they loved and trusted him they obeyed. They simply knew that Christ had spoken and that his word could be trusted no matter how long it took. So they just waited and prayed, without any other plans for the future, while their businesses suffered and worried family members expressed concern. What a challenge this is to our instant culture and the speed with which we lose heart.

Jesus told the parable of the **persistent widow (Luke 18¹⁻⁸)** to emphasise this very principle "that they should always pray and not give up."

The example of Daniel:

Daniel 9:3 *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

Daniel 10:3 *I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till **three whole weeks** were fulfilled.*

Daniel 10:12

¹²*Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-*

one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia

Charles Finney's prayer team:

Charles Finney was one of the greatest evangelists in the world. 90% of his converts stood firm in their faith. He was first a lawyer who came into ministry. He used to read his sermons off the page, and as he would be reading his sermons, the sinners would fall off the pews begging for salvation, he would say 'wait until I have finished the sermon.'

His secret: He had a prayer team that would go to the place where he was about to minister. They would book in a hotel, lock themselves in a room, not go to meals, and fast and pray for the souls of that town or city.

True story: The hotel manager phoned Mr. Finney and said: "I am very concerned, because your friends have not taken meals in 5 days. When I walked past their rooms, I heard some strange groaning, so I took a chair, looked through the window and saw them rolling around on the floor holding their stomachs..."

Becoming the prayer:

To pray is to change.

We cannot pray for revival without being willing to be the answer to that prayer. E.g. "God please save my neighbour." The God says: "Go and tell them about me, share your testimony." And we just ignore that and say: "God please save my neighbour."

Revival needs to start in our own hearts. And that is impossible without the Holy Spirit:

John 7:37

³⁷On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those [£]believing in Him would receive; for the [£]Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.