

On Earth As It Is In Heaven

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[0 : 00] On earth as it is in heaven. On earth as it is in heaven. On the whole wide earth as it is in heaven.

Over the next eight weeks, Tenth Church is going to journey through the prayer Jesus of Nazareth taught his followers to pray, the so-called Lord's Prayer.

Pastor Ken will be the principal guide on the journey, but he has asked me to launch us on our way. On this Lord's Day, when we gather around the Lord's Table, the place where more than anywhere else I know, we experience on earth as it is in heaven.

Why eight weeks in the Lord's Prayer? Why spend that much time in the Lord's Prayer? Answer? Because praying the Lord's Prayer turns out to be the most effective way of participating in the Great Revolution.

Praying the Lord's Prayer is the most effective way for us mere human beings and sinful human beings at that to participate in the Great Revolution that began when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

[1 : 31] You realize that, do you not? That Jesus' birth inaugurated a Great Revolution? That Jesus came into the world to work a revolution?

I know it is a provocative way of putting it, especially in the present historical context, when all over the world we are witnessing massive changing of the guard.

But that is precisely what is happening in the life and ministry of Jesus, a changing of the guard.

He is bringing about a massive revolution. It is what He declared in His first public proclamation.

Jesus came on the scene, His arrival having been announced by John the Baptist, with the stunning news.

The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe this good news.

Those were the first words out of the mouth of the Savior.

[2 : 37] The time is fulfilled. The glorious, redeeming reign of God has come near. Turn around and embrace this good news.

In those few lines, Jesus was declaring that God's radical intervention in the world, which was thought to only take place at the end of history, is taking place now in the middle of history.

The longed-for revolution is underway, is one way you could rephrase Jesus' announcement. The revolution has begun, is another way. On earth, as it is in heaven.

And the writers of the gospel tell us that straight away, Jesus began calling people to follow Him.

People from all walks of life, from every social status. Fishermen, tax collectors, homemakers, farmers, lawyers, doctors, scholars, prostitutes.

Calling them all to get on board the train. Come follow me. Come take my yoke upon you. Come make your home in me. Come eat and drink of the new life of the kingdom.

[3 : 47] Oh, what a privilege. To be called by Jesus Christ, to follow Him in this world, is the call to participate with Him in His revolution.

You realize that, do you not? To be called into relationship with Jesus Christ is to be called to live a revolutionary life.

To live the life that He describes in His first major sermon, His famous Sermon on the Mount, recorded by Matthew the tax collector in chapters 5 through 7 of His gospel. The sermon, which, if more of the world would read and take seriously, would result in a very different world.

A very different world. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. You have heard it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

[5 : 01] However you want people to treat you, so treat them. This is the law and the prophets. Oh, what a revolutionary vision of human life. And if we would just take Jesus seriously and live His way, it's because we have not taken Him seriously that the world is in the condition it is right now.

The illustrations of this fact are all around us. But take Jesus' Sermon on the Mount seriously and things begin to change. A revolution begins to take place. Bigger and more life-giving than any revolution ever dreamed of before or since.

Join Jesus in the revolution and we find ourselves living in a very different world. And at the heart of His great Sermon on the Mount is the prayer.

Jesus teaches His followers to pray. Our Father in heaven. Jesus places it right in the middle of His sermon. In chapter 6 of chapters 5 through 7 of Matthew's Gospel.

In fact, He places it right in the middle of chapter 6. He places it right in the middle of His sermon of the new way of life He's bringing into the world.

[6 : 15] And I think He does this as a way to say, praying this prayer is the most effective way to join me in my revolution.

And at the heart of His prayer are the words, On earth as it is in heaven. To pray the Lord's Prayer is to participate in an invasion.

The invasion of the earth by heaven. Which is why I submit to you to pray the Lord's Prayer is the most revolutionary thing you and I can do in the present moment in history.

Will you now open your Bibles to the Gospel according to Matthew? Chapter 6. We're going to be reading Jesus' prayer in its larger context. So we begin with verse 5 reading through verse 15.

Listen. The Lord Jesus is speaking to us. When you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners in order to be seen by others.

[7 : 27] Truly, I say to you, they have their reward in full. The implication being they've been seen by others. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Pray then in this way. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

[8 : 32] But if you do not forgive them, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. Living God, we believe that you enabled Matthew the tax collector to remember these words of the Lord Jesus and to write them down accurately.

We believe that you have saved these words for us. And I pray now in your mercy and grace you would help us enter into the reality to which these words point as never before.

For we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. When you pray, says Jesus, pray in this way.

in this way. Matthew 6, 9. Another version has it. This then is how you should pray. But there is no should in the text.

Literally, it is thusly. This is how you, you pray thusly. Meaning that in giving us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is not telling us that we have to pray these exact words in this exact order.

[9 : 37] I think Jesus is saying to us, here is a way to pray that pleases my Father, your Father. Here's a way to pray that delights my Father, your Father.

I think Jesus is saying, here's a way to pray without having to wonder, is God okay with what I'm saying? Now, in this introductory message in the series on the Lord's Prayer, I'm simply going to make a number of observations about the prayer as a whole.

Nothing fancy or sophisticated, just a number of observations. Six, the teacher of the prayer, the embrace of the prayer, the flow of the prayer, the center of the prayer, the verbs of the prayer, and the one to whom we pray.

Here we go. Joining the great revolution. Observation one, the teacher of the prayer. It's a critical observation.

Jesus of Nazareth, the Son. The Son of Mary, the Son of God. The Son of God, the Son of Mary. That is, fully human, fully God.

[10:54] The teacher of this prayer is fully human, fully God. As Son of Mary, He is, like Mary, fully human, which means that He knows all about life on this planet.

He knows what it means to be a human in this broken world. And in particular, it means that He knows what it means to pray as a human being. The writer of the book of Hebrews understood this well.

Hebrews chapter 5, verses 7 and 8. In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the one who is able to save Him from death.

As Son of Mary, as one of us, He knows what we need in order to live fully human, fully alive. He says, just before giving us the prayer, Father knows what you need.

And He knows what we need because He Himself needs it in His humanity. As the Son of God, like God, fully God, He knows the mind and heart of God.

[12:01] He lives in the Father's heart. He comes from the Father's heart. He knows what pleases the Father. He knows the Father's passions. Which suggests to me that in the Lord's prayer, Jesus is giving us His revelation of His Father.

It is as though He is saying, listen, I know the Father. I know what is on your Father's heart and mind. He knows the Lord's heart. The hallowing of His name, the bringing of His kingdom, the doing of His good and perfect will, providing for the welfare of His children, forgiving His children's sins and freeing them to forgive their sisters and brothers' sins, delivering His children from the seductive schemes of evil.

As Son of Mary, Son of God, Jesus knows firsthand our needs and the Father's deepest desires. And in His prayer, He brings them together.

The teacher of the prayer is the Son. Observation two, the embrace of the prayer. In my book on the Lord's Prayer, I use the phrase scope of the prayer.

I now prefer the word embrace. It's a more dynamic way of putting it, suggesting that in His prayer, Jesus is gathering up all of our concerns into His arms and He's lifting them to the Father.

[13:31] And I think we can see that this prayer embraces everything imaginable. Name any need you have and it is included in this prayer.

Name any issue you are facing and it's included in this prayer. For example, Jesus embraces all of time. the past, forgive us our debts.

The present, give us this day our daily bread. The future, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. And in His prayer, Jesus embraces all the dimensions of our humanity.

Physical, give us this day our daily bread. Relational, social, as we forgive our debtors. Emotional, psychological, deliver us from evil's deception, the twisting of our true identity and political.

Your kingdom come. Oh, yes, Father, bring Your kingdom, Your kingdom, Your kingdom of true justice and true freedom and authentic community and wholeness.

[14:37] Again, name any need or concern we have. Name any fear or any desire and we find it embraced by Jesus' prayer. The whole of life is taken up into the embrace of God.

Observation three, the flow of the prayer. There are six petitions. Your name be hallowed, Your kingdom come, Your will be done. Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil or the evil one. Did you notice that there seems to be two halves to the prayer?

The first half, name, kingdom, will. The second half, bread, forgiveness, guidance, deliverance. And did you notice that each of these two halves involves a different set of prepositions?

The first half, your, your, your. The second half, us, our, us, we, us, us. The point of the flow, a prioritizing of our needs.

[15:46] Your, your, your, then, us, us, us. Yes, we need bread, right? Yes, we need forgiveness and we need to forgive, right?

Yes, we need guidance and deliverance, right? Jesus knows this and so he frees us to pray for it. But it turns out we have greater needs. We do?

Yes, we do. We need name, kingdom, and will. We need for the Father's name to be hallowed in us and in the world.

We need for the Father's kingdom to come in us and in the world. We need for the Father's will to be done in us and in the world. Yes, we will experience full human flourishing when we have our

daily bread, when sins are forgiven and we forgive the sins of others and when we are guided into the path of life and protected from the evil one.

But Jesus is telling us that we will finally experience full human flourishing when the Father's name is treated with reverence and dignity in our hearts and in the world, when the Father's kingdom comes in all its fullness and when our Father's good pleasure, good will is accomplished in our wills and in the wills of the world.

[17 : 13] Thus the flow of the prayer. Your before us. Because the more critical prayer, more critical than the us request is the your request.

It's when we focus on the your request that the us request are then put into perspective. It turns out that the us requests are actually embedded in the your request.

If all God does is answer the top half, automatically answers the bottom half. Observation four. The center of the prayer.

Matthew 6.10 on earth as it is in heaven. Literally, as in heaven so also on earth. And I think it goes with all six petitions with the three before the center and the three following the center.

So, your name be hallowed on earth as it is in heaven. Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread on earth as it is in heaven.

[18 : 22] Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors on earth as it is in heaven. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil on earth as it is in heaven. Cool.

No? I think this phrase on earth as it is in heaven captures the passion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God's passion is to bring the life of heaven on earth.

Which is why I said at the beginning of this message to pray the Lord's prayers to participate in an invasion. The invasion of the earth by heaven. I have this picture of all of us and all the members of all the other churches in our city going about our daily activities quietly praying on earth as it is in heaven.

Can you imagine what would happen? I'm wondering if the phrase at the center of the prayer might not signal another way to look at the structure of the prayer.

I'm wondering if Jesus hasn't structured the prayer in a parallelism in a chiasm. If this is the case name and temptation go together kingdom and forgiveness go together and will and bread go together.

[19 : 41] If this is the case Jesus is saying that temptation is all about the name of God. that the evil one seeks to distort the name of God to distort the nature and character of God.

Jesus in this case then would be saying that the kingdom of God is all about relationships. The restoring of strained and broken relationships through the power of his grace. And then Jesus would say that the will of God is all about making it possible for human beings to live sustained and productive lives.

All of it on earth as it is in heaven. Observation five the verbs of the prayer and here's where things get really exciting especially the verbs in the first half be hallowed come be done bold verbs very bold in the original the verb comes at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis not your name be hallowed but be hallowed your name not your kingdom come but come your kingdom not your will be done but be done your will now there are two things we need to know about these bold verbs the first is that each of them is in the imperative mood remember what the imperative mood is about the emphasis of the imperative mood what is it command especially in the Greek language which is the language of Matthew 6 the imperative mood is the mood of command do this do that be this be that come go stop imperative now in the Greek language the imperative is never used to address a superior never one would never go into the mayor's office and start using the imperative fix this fix that build this build that cancel that tax and cancel that tax too never is the imperative used in addressing a superior well well well surprise surprise surprise in the

Lord's prayer we are addressing a superior are we not our father in heaven superior of superiors right and Jesus tells us to use the imperative be be be be done all in the imperative oh my we're not just asking we're commanding yikes be come be be be hallowed come be done be hallowed your name come your kingdom be done your will do it do it do it whoa how does that make you feel now remember who teaches us this prayer Jesus son of Mary son of God he knows the father he knows what pleases the father and he is telling us that the father likes his children to come to him and use the imperative

Jesus is telling us that the father wants his children to pray boldly do it father I want to quickly add please the second thing to know about these bold verbs they are in the passive mood voice imperative mood passive voice why why passive I think partly to interject this note of reverence it kind of softens the sense of ordering God around but mostly it's in the passive because only God can do it only God can hallow his name only God can bring his kingdom only God can do his will so the prayer is not what we have tended to make it the prayer is not let us hallow your name let us bring your kingdom let us do your will we are not the ones doing it we are not the subject of the verbs the father is the subject of the verbs because only the father can do it so this prayer is father you do it we cannot so you you do it you hallow your name on earth as it is in heaven you bring your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven you make your will be done on earth as it is in heaven resist the horizontalizing of the vertical the father is the subject of the verbs not we father right now your name is being hallowed in heaven hallowed on earth right now father your kingdom has come in heaven make it come on earth right now father your will is being done in heaven do it on earth how are you feeling right now i feel as if a ton of bricks just got lifted off my soul i've prayed this prayer most of my life let me do it no no father you do it because only you can bold verbs very bold and observation six the one to whom we pray our father and not just any father the father Jesus knows and loves the father Jesus knows and trusts our father in heaven in heaven meaning very close at hand so very close most people think that heaven is a far away place that heaven is way up there but Jesus does not think that for Jesus heaven is another dimension of the created order it's surrounding the visible order it's encompassing the tangible order intersecting infusing sustaining the dimensions of reality we can see and hear and feel and touch in heaven as real and as close as the air we breathe heaven is the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our very being which is why going to heaven does not involve a long trip when we go to heaven we simply slip through to the other side the one to whom we pray is close so very very close closer than our breathing and breathing his life into us moment by moment in heaven it also means on the throne for

[27 : 05] Jesus heaven is God's throne earth is God's footstool as he says earlier in the sermon on the mount the psalmist rejoiced oh thou thou who art enthroned in the heavens revelation 4 1 I saw a door open and a throne with someone sitting on it the father Jesus father sitting on the throne of the universe if this is not the case then praying is a futile exercise but if it is the case then the one to whom we pray is able to actually do what he's being asked to do father not just almighty not just rock of ages not just source of all being but father the father Jesus knows and trust and loves the father he wants us to know and trust and love I think I often hear Jesus saying to me you know what your problem is Daryl you do not know my father let me teach you about my father he wants to be your father too you can see then that the gospel is in the opening lines of the

Lord's prayer Jesus father has become our father it's why the apostle John would later on in his life celebrate with great joy behold what wonder behold how great the love the father has for us that we should be called children of God Jesus the son comes from heaven to earth to bring us into his relationship with his father so that we can know and trust and love the father the way he does making all this possible by sending the holy spirit the spirit of adoption as the apostle Paul calls him who enables us to speak to Jesus father the way Jesus does Abba father the teacher of the prayer wants us to know the one to whom we pray the infinitely good and generous and gracious father who wants us to know his name who wants us to be alive in his kingdom who wants us to thrive in his will who wants us to have all the bread we need to know his name and live in his kingdom and thrive in his will who wants us to know the joy and freedom of forgiveness and who wants to deliver us from all the lies of the liar so that we might live in the wonder of being children of God the father so wants all of this for us and for the world that he sends his son from heaven to earth to make it happen he who has lived in intimate communion with the father from all eternity has come from heaven to earth affecting the greatest of all revolutions and we participate in that revolution by praying his prayer which

I invite you to do with me right now as the words come up on the screen just say those words with me our father in heaven close at hand on the throne hallow your name in me on the earth as it is in heaven bring your kingdom in me on earth as it is in heaven do your will in me on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for yours father yours is the kingdom yours is the power yours is the glory forever amen daughteratha he vou suffer after he will see you