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SERIES: REWRITING JESUS

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TITLE: Who's Your Daddy Pt. 2

In Matthew Chapter 6, Jesus said, “*Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven.’*” Our prayers are directed to our Heavenly Father as His spiritual children. Who are his spiritual children? It is you and me, as people who have been saved by grace. It is you and I, who believe in our depravity, and have turned from our sin, and turned to Jesus Christ.

But wait, does that mean God doesn't hear the prayers of nonbelievers? Of course, He does. God knows everything, and He sees everything; He hears everything. But does He *answer* the prayers of nonbelievers? Well, as we looked at a few passages yesterday, there's a strong case to say *generally*, no. But as a sovereign God, *sometimes*, yes.

And then, Jesus reminds us that **He is in Heaven**. This is a good reminder for us that, yes, He is our Heavenly Father – our Daddy. And still, He is God. He is above all Creation. He is all-powerful. He is unchangeable. He is holy, holy, holy – therefore, perfect. There is *no one* who is like God.

Just like I desire for my children to know me as *their* daddy, they must also remember who I am in their lives. I want that intimacy, I want that open door, and yet, there is still a needed level of respect. The same is clearly true with God. So, we can approach God in a unique and personal way, but we must *never* forget who He is: *God in Heaven!!* This is an awesome privilege.

Jesus then provides the first request: Hallowed be your name. “Hallowed” is not a word we use today, but it simply means to make holy. This isn't a request for God to try to become holier. He is perfect. He is unchangeable. He is already holy. So, what is Jesus getting at? What are we to be praying for?

I believe two things: First, is that **God's name would be made holy in our lives**. In other words, that **you and I as His children would daily pursue holiness**. In 1 Peter 1:16, Peter reminds us that *we are to be holy, for God is holy*. Peter also said that we are to “**sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.**” That is daily moving Him to a greater level of authority in our lives, resulting in greater obedience and holiness. Daily, we are to become more and more like Christ, and this all begins in our hearts. Jesus said that **what comes out of our mouths is a reflection of our hearts, and this defiles us** (Matt. 5:18). When we recognize God as Holy, we won't use His name in vain or as a curse word. No more using OMG. Using His name as a curse word is offensive to Him and should be to His children. **As children of God, you simply won't and cannot abuse His name while hallowing His name.**

James, the half-brother of Jesus, hit on this in James 3 (ESV), saying, “but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and saltwater? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.” Vs. 8-12

James' point is that who we are in Christ will be *evident*. You cannot profess to be a Christian to people at church, and then *deny* him in your actions, in your lifestyle, and in your words the remaining six days a week! This has *nothing* to do with perfection. This has to do with heart posture, because remember, from the heart flows what we say, and what we do. **So we are praying for our lives to reflect our reverence of Him – to allow His Holiness to make us holy as well.**

The second element of this request is that we are praying that **the world around us will repent of their sins and turn to Him and revere Him as holy**. It is a prayer that the lost will be saved. It's a prayer that people will turn to Jesus as their Savior, resulting in their own pursuit of holiness. **So request number one is that we are to pray for God's holiness to be evident in our lives, and also that the world around us will turn to Him as Savior and Lord: Hallowed in us and hallowed in them.**

Then in verse 10, Jesus gives us two more requests. The next is: “Your kingdom come.” It is true that right now, Jesus is ruling at the right hand of God. He sits on the throne and is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, forever and always. Yet, we are to pray – to desire that His Kingdom will come. What else needs to happen if He is already reigning in Heaven? He needs to usher in His physical reign on Earth. It is the immediate and beginning of the Millennial Kingdom – His thousand-year reign on Earth. Revelation 22:20, Jesus says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” And then John says, “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!” *Maranatha!* So when praying, we should be like John, asking for Jesus to come quickly!

But there are also two other ways we can pray so His Kingdom will come. **We can pray for the conversion of sinners.** We should pray that people who are far from God will come to know Him as Savior and Lord. When this happens, His Heavenly and Spiritual Kingdom increases. The Kingdom is coming, and is expanded when people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION:

N: I want to break here and bring in Cara [Whitney] and Arnie [Cole]. Cara, how does Jesus' reference to “your kingdom come” change your perspective of this life?

C: Well, it's not the end. It reminds me that there's something ahead that's worth fighting for, and that what we lose here, is going to be redeemed on the other side. So there's more to look forward to. So don't focus our energy on what we've left behind, but that what's ahead. [Right]. It's exciting.

N: Well, Arnie, what about you, with thinking about life here on Earth? Does life here on Earth ever give us a glimpse of Heaven?

A: Oh, I think so. I've been in places on my boat in Alaska, where they're not even on a chart, it's just unspoiled. And it's like, wow, if this is anywhere, what Heaven's going to be like, I want to be there. So yeah, I've been in parts of the world that are just truly heavenly.

N: Yeah. I think God does give us little glimpses here and there, because again, at one time, this was all good, right? It was very good. And yet, you know, because of our sin, things have changed. But I think the key in all of this, is to not fall in love with the world, and to think, "Man, this is as good as it gets", or to think that we can usher in a human reformation of the planet, so that it will become Heaven on Earth. We don't have the power to do that. Instead, God is creating a moment in time, where all this will be fixed and it will be truly Paradise restored. And so we can enjoy what He's created: Be good stewards of it and take the moments in, but we still have to long for Heaven, because that is well worth waiting for.

C: Amen.

The line, "thy kingdom come", compels us to pray like John in saying "Amen, Come Lord Jesus." Secondly, it reminds us to pray for the conversions of sinners. But there's also a third way to pray for His Kingdom to come. **It's the prayer for our faithfulness and obedience in following Christ.** *Is King Jesus a little king or big king in your life?* To have a kingdom, you must have a king! So is Jesus a little king or a big king – a real king in your life?

One way you can tell, is if you take Jesus' words seriously in Mark 8:34 (ESV), "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". Are you following Him? When He says, "follow", do you go? Are you dying to your desires? To your wishes? Likewise, reflect on the Great Commission. In Jesus' Great Commission, He instructed his disciples (and you and I today) to teach those we disciple, to obey all that He commanded. But it first starts with our own obedience, with our own following.

And here's the thing: It's not just obedience to *some* of His teaching, but *all* of it. **Do you treat the Bible like a Chinese buffet, taking what you want and leaving the rest?** Jesus says, to be His disciple – His follower - that's *not* going to work. We are to obey all of it. **So request number two "Your kingdom come" means we ask first that He returns to establish His earthly rule. Second, increase the Kingdom with new converts. And third, for Jesus to truly be King and Lord of our lives as evidenced by our obedience.**

And then Jesus gives us one more request in this model of prayer: "your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." One of the common questions pastors get asked about, has to do with God's will. This usually involves trying to discern God's will, or even what we mean by God's will.

Generally speaking, there are 3 aspects of God's will, as we see in the Bible. First is His **sovereign will**. These are the things He's decreed that will come to pass. An example is God willed and spoke the universe to exist. God also has an end in mind that right and wrong will be judged at the end of time. God's spiritual children will spend eternity with Him, and those who

reject Jesus Christ will spend eternity in Hell separated from Him. These are the things that will happen, no matter what. The second aspect of God's will is **His will of desire**. God desires that none should perish. When people come to saving faith in Jesus, this pleases Him. It's His desire, though it doesn't always happen. The third aspect of God's will is **His preceptive will**. This is His will and desire for you and I as Christians - His spiritual children. It is God's instructions for us in His Word for us to live a godly and pleasing life. It's one of obedience to Him. Again, this will doesn't always happen.

So what is Jesus encouraging us to pray for here? Jesus says, "your will be done", but it doesn't end there. He qualifies it. He continues "on earth as it is in heaven." This is our clue as to the meaning. There is no doubt His sovereign will is carried out both in Heaven and on Earth. That's a guaranteed answered prayer – forever and always. So that's not what Jesus was getting at. His desired will isn't always met—namely the salvation of people. We most certainly should pray for people who are far from God and pray for them by name. We *should* pray this way, but this isn't what Jesus was specifically getting at either.

I believe what Jesus was getting at was our submission to His Kingship resulting in our obedience. Why? The angels do not struggle with sin. There is no battle of the flesh and Spirit in Heaven. But we know that there is down here! The Apostle Paul said this in Romans 6:16-18 (NASB): "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Friend, as Christians, we are no longer slaves to sin. Christ has freed us. It is as if we were locked up in a cage, and that cage was our sin. We were trapped with no hope of getting out. Then Christ came and unlocked the door for us. The door is unlocked and wide open. You don't need to stay in your cage of sin. He has freed you! We all need to pray that we will bow our knees in daily submission to King Jesus. We need to daily be praying for the Spirit-driven ability to die to ourselves and obey our Savior and King. In all we pray, we should pray, "not my will, but your will." We are to be praying, "not my will, King Jesus, but your will." This isn't easy for us. It's a constant battle, but we need to ask the question, "Do we really trust God?" Do you really trust God? Do I really trust God? If the answer is yes, giving up control of our lives is possible. Giving up the things that once we were slaves to is not only *possible*, but is the *outflow* of our belief!

Friends, there is *no doubt* that God desires for us to commune with Him: To daily, hourly, *continually* reach out and talk to Him with right motives and in an intimate way. Today, we see, and hopefully embrace, that part of the model for our prayer life is to focus our attention – our worship - on God. Why? Because He is worthy. We pray that His name will be made holy in our lives and over all the Earth. We pray for His quick return. We should pray for an expansion of His spiritual Kingdom. And we are to pray that our lives will be a reflection of Jesus' rule not just in Heaven, but in our very lives.

If you're listening today and you aren't a Christian, you aren't a follower of Christ – you *can* be. All you have to do is believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Believe that He paid the penalty for your sin. Turn from your sin and put your trust in Him and Him alone. Do this, and God will say “Son” or “Daughter,” and you can cry out, “Daddy!” But for the rest of us, I believe there is no better application than to worship Him *right now through prayer*. So let us pray for an expanse of His Kingship in our very lives. Because when we do this, people will see the difference Christ makes in our lives. They will see that our faith is real. And we will encourage other Christians around us to be conformed to the image of our Savior. And of course, let us pray for an expanse in the Kingdom. Jesus said, the harvest is ready, but where are the workers? Let us pray for the workers and let us pray that people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Let me pray for us now: “Daddy you are holy. Daddy, let my life reflect your holiness. And allow your Kingdom to be evident in my life; let your kingship be evident in my life; and Father, Daddy, allow your Kingdom to expand. Amen.”

N: Arnie and Cara, can I get an “Amen”? [Amen, Nat]. [Amen]. So let's go back to the text here though. I mean, we read that, *not my will, but yours*. I think that is a hard thing to pray, for a lot of people. Arnie, do you think that's a challenging thing to add on to a prayer?

A: Oh, for sure. And mean it; you know, I think that's the big thing, especially praying in public, you know - sometimes you want to impress people - but to say that and really mean it is huge. And I always, or oftentimes, pray, “Help me get out of your way, Lord”, which is, I think maybe saying the same thing. It doesn't sound as daunting, but I think it means the same.

N: We were out of town recently, and we were with my mom, and she was walking, and she's been on her feet, her whole life as a hairstylist. And it's just over time, you know, her back has begun to cause some issues. But as we were walking, my 11 year old son, he goes, “We just need to pray for Grandma”, and “Dear God, praying for Grandma. Pray that her back won't hurt her anymore, so she can enjoy this time, but not my will, but your will”. And my mom stopped. And she said, “Holy smokes. That's really unusual for a kid to pray that way”. But I think that's the right posture to have. And if we really trust God and His best for our lives, then we can do that with integrity. But it is not easy.

N: Cara, we are to pray that our lives will be a reflection of Jesus' rule, not just in Heaven, but in our very lives today. That might be a little daunting to some. So tell us why it should be something we want to pray.

C: Well, the phrase, *your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven*, is a reminder that we're praying for God's plan in our lives and for the world, not our own plan. So, you know, with all the things that are going on in the world, this is my plug for evangelism, because I swear the storm clouds are gathering. And you know, you think about Noah and his

obedience and his love for the Lord: He did not build that ark when it was raining. Noah was just an obedient follower. And God's will is for lost souls to come to Him. And so many of us are just sitting on our hands, and we're afraid to talk to people about Jesus, because we won't seem nice, but you can be gentle, and be brave, and truthful, and fierce about Jesus. I mean, we have the cure for death, so I don't know why you can keep that to yourself. That's His will – He wants us to talk to people and make Him known.

N: Yeah. So often we kind of treat prayer like social media nowadays, right? It's that easy, go-to place, for us to maybe talk to God about something, or to vent maybe our perspective. But we need to be people who don't just - as you said - sit on our hands - we need to be people of prayer, absolutely. But God has also given us the privilege of going out and doing something about it. So don't just be the social media sitter - get out there and do something, and follow Cara's instruction, and go out there and “reach the lost at any cost”.

A: So I've got a pastor question for Pastor Nat. [Okay]. It always used to bug me when these pastor guys, you know, I would think, “Oh, they're trying to be so real with God”. And they would tell the congregation that I'm sitting in, that they got really mad at God, and they told him how disappointed they were with Him, and on and on about their anger towards God. Can you really be that real with God? I mean, what's the saying? Familiarity breeds contempt.

N: You know, that's a hard thing. I honestly struggle with this, because I do think, and I do believe, that it's okay to be honest with God. I think God clearly is big enough to handle our disappointments, our frustration, our anger, our sadness, but I still struggle with doing it. I think there are those unique moments, where I've been so overwhelmed, that I have talked to God, and said, “God, I'm sick of it. If you really exist, you surely wouldn't be allowing this to happen in my life. What's wrong with you?” And so I've had those moments, but if I'm honest, it's really hard for me. But I think that we should. And I think we're able to. I mean, read through the Bible. I love reading King David, because David, he would go, “God, what's up? Where are you? I'm being hunted down like a dog. And you're God. What's up? I hope I can be more like that. So yeah, we should be.

I think also we need to be open for God to heal - to heal our hearts - and to show us that He does care, but it's a process. It's an ongoing process. And I think we see that in our own personal relationships, right? And we're hesitant in telling each other what we really feel sometimes. We don't like confrontation. And so I think it's only going to carry over into our relationship with God.

A: You still have to be respectful though, you know?

N: Well, and I think you're exactly right, Arnie. In all that, we do need to still, as we said, I think in yesterday's discussion, we need to come back to the point where we have that balanced view: “Father, I'm angry” and “You're still God; I do trust you”. And that's even what we see with King David - in his frustration - as you progress through the Psalms, he goes from anger, frustration, confusion to, “But you're God, I trust you”. *The mercies of the Lord are new every morning*. And so he comes back to that place of reverence. So I think you're exactly right. Be open, be honest, and still respect God as sovereign over all.