



February 9, 2020
Matthew 6:10
Pastor Phil Ward
The Kingdom of God

Hi Everyone. Thank you for reading this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the Word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us, as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's Word all over the world.

We want you to know, too, that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church, where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We realize also, that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we hope you are using this message to gather with your family or other believers, or people from the community and that it will be a great encouragement to you, as you hear God speak into your life, helping you to become disciples who are true, reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

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Well we're going to jump right into the next couple of petitions, the second and third petition. Last week we saw *Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name*. The first petition is about God's name being renowned or regarded as holy and glorious.

So now we're going to look in chapter 6:10, *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. These are two petitions that are put together.

I don't know about you, but if you're one of those collector-type people (and I know this to be true of some people), you collect various things. But one thing I have started to collect, and it's kind of odd because we don't really travel very much, but I collect those Starbucks mugs. You know, like "I've been there" kind of mugs. So our family took a trip to the East Coast. I got a couple mugs from Boston and Philadelphia, and things like that. Then we went to Israel and Jordan, so I got a Starbucks mug from Jordan and also one in London. You're probably asking, why London? Well, Israel doesn't have Starbucks, and we stopped in London, so I figured, hey, why not get one here? So I never stepped outside the airport in London, but nobody needs to know that.

So I have these mugs. One thing I was thinking about is, I use the mugs as kind of decorations. They are under the Keurig in my office. So technically, someone could use one for coffee, but I'd rather they didn't! (Laughter). But I was thinking, how funny is it that I have coffee mugs, which everyone understands, are to be used for drinking a hot beverage, yet I'm telling them not to use it for that; it's a decoration.

It made me realize – when you look at a coffee mug, everything about its design tells you exactly what it is meant to do. Like it is supposed to have a hot beverage in it, because obviously it can contain a liquid. But there is also a handle so you don't burn your hand. So it's

like hot liquid, and an opening at the top, but you can blow on it to cool it down, and you can drink it. It's usually a good portion. Not like a 5-gallon bucket, but a portion that most human beings would be able to drink. I started to think, when you look at the design of the thing, you start to realize what it is intended for. Its use is really found in what it is. Then, you realize, you can also use coffee mugs in all kinds of wrong ways. So if you decide to use a coffee mug to transport soup in my car from location to location, you'll spill on yourself. It's going to happen. If you decide a coffee mug is a perfect vehicle to be able to pour gasoline in your car – you'll spill a lot. Or if you decide, since you love pot roast, you'll cook up a pot roast and put it into a coffee mug, you'll realize you have issues. It's not going to fit.

So the Greek word for this, this idea that something is purposefully designed, is called *telos*. It means that there is a thing that is designed particularly in order to accomplish a purpose. So its purpose is tied to its design.

One question I have had is, when you think about the church, what is its *telos*? What is its purpose? What is it designed to do? What is a church supposed to accomplish? And, by extension, what does it mean to be a follower of Christ? What are you made to do? What is your purpose? How should you function? *Telos*.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the first question, *What is the chief end of man?* In other words, what is the chief *telos*? What is the chief purpose of man? The answer is *to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever*. I remember when my daughter was young, she asked a really penetrating question. She said, "Daddy, if Jesus came to save us from our sins and help us to go to heaven, then why don't we just go to heaven now?" I said, "Because God has big things for us to do here on earth." That's the *telos*.

The question is, what are those big things? What is it that God is purposing us for? Why are we made individuals, into a body. Why are we to never consider ourselves individual Christians, but always to consider ourselves individual Christians who have been made a part of a community?

I think it's because of this petition. I believe this petition (Matthew 6:10) is the *telos*, the purpose for why there is a church. Jesus said,

⁹Pray then like this: . . .
¹⁰Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

I think this is the purpose for why there is such a thing as the church.

Father, we are asking, by Your mercy and grace, grant us all that we need to understand Your word. Grant me especially, the kind of grace I need to speak well. God, help me to say what is in accordance with Your word. If there is anything which is outside of Your word and unhelpful, would You cause Your people to forget it immediately. But if there is such words that will be edifying to Your people, that will build us up in Christlikeness to full maturity (as Ephesians 4 says), then bring those words to my mind, let me say them, and let Your people hear them. For Your glory we ask these things, in Jesus' name, amen.

When we read, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” the first thing you probably think to yourself (at least I do, and I did) was that the three words “Your kingdom come” imply that God’s kingdom is not yet here, that we need to pray for its coming.

Vinnie Angelo, who wrote this week in the workbook, does a really good job of unpacking why that is not the best way to understand the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is actually already here. He goes to great lengths to establish that fact, so I won’t belabor that. I’ll simply say, the Kingdom of God is, in fact, here. There are many reasons why we know that to be true. It’s not something we have to wait for in the distant future. It is very present, very real, very here, but many people miss that reality. The reason they miss it is because they have expectations that go unmet. It isn’t because God isn’t faithful to His promises. It’s because perhaps the expectations we have aren’t necessarily the ones we ought to have. At least the fulfillment of them isn’t what we are expecting.

We see this with the Jewish people. In fact, the Jewish people had a lot of unmet expectations concerning Jesus and the Kingdom of God. You see, their background (Jeremiah 23:5) was – they had a messianic expectation. Here is what one of the messianic expectations was. This is what they were expecting when the Messiah would come and bring God’s kingdom:

⁵ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

So the people expected that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. We’ll talk about that in a little bit. That He would reign as a king. That He would execute justice and righteousness in Israel from Jerusalem. That was their expectation. And since the Jews were under Roman occupation, and the temple had been rebuilt in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, and also that King Herod had expanded the temple complex, the people were expecting that when the Messiah shows up, He will overthrow the Roman occupation. He will establish God’s kingdom. He will reign from David’s throne as King of Kings, and it is all going to be through militaristic force. That was their expectation.

Then when Jesus came, He came preaching that He is the Messiah, and the Kingdom of God has come. The people were going, *uhh, I don’t think so. You have no weapons, You have no military. You have no money. You’re not really a political leader at all. You come from Galilee – that’s like the other side of the railroad tracks. You are a blue-collar laborer. And you are the Messiah?? Not so much.* So they didn’t see what Jesus was talking about because their expectations were not necessarily what they ought to be, therefore, their expectations were unmet. Therefore, they didn’t see Jesus for who He was or what He was preaching.

For instance, when Jesus went to Nazareth (read about it in Luke 4), He went to a synagogue. It was His custom. He went there and they handed Him a scroll of Isaiah. He unrolled it and set it down. He found Isaiah 61. There He begins to teach in the synagogue that *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight for the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.* Then He ends. He folds up the scroll and hands it back to the synagogue attendant and He sits down. The whole room is silent. Everyone is looking at Him like, are You going to say anything? This is like a cliff-hanger. What comes out of Jesus’ mouth next is profound. He says quite simply, in front of everyone: “This scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

What did He say? He just said, "I am the Messiah, I came preaching liberty. I came preaching forgiveness. I came preaching all the things about the gospel and the Kingdom of God." In fact (Mark 1:15), you see Jesus explicitly, in Galilee, saying

¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

So the Messiah has come, because Jesus has come. And Jesus is the Messiah. When Jesus came, the Messiah came. Therefore, the promised kingdom of the Messiah has also come.

I want to ask and answer four questions about the Kingdom of God. I think asking and answering these four questions will give us a flavor of this concept of the kingdom, because the concept of kingdom is huge throughout scripture. It's something we need to understand, especially because there is a lot of popular books out there, that talk about the Kingdom of God, and they are a little bit -- whacked out. So yeah, we need to sober up and have a better conception of the kingdom. (I'm trying to say this politically correct).

So four questions about the kingdom. Here is the first, simply, what is God's kingdom?

What is God's kingdom? My answer would be this: God's kingdom is God's reign over His people for their good, and for His glory. This is a good definition, I think, because it encapsulates a couple of points, which are crucial to understand about God's kingdom. God's kingdom, specifically, is a redemptive kingdom. Now, we understand God is the king of all creation. He rules and reigns over all things. But there is a particular nuance about God's kingdom that we need to pay attention to. When you read in the Bible about God's kingdom, it is really reserved, most explicitly, for His own people. He rules over His own people for their good, but ultimately, for His own glory. His glory is the more important purpose than our good. But, in our good, He gets the glory.

Another definition comes from Graham Goldsworthy. He is a scholar from Australia. He says:

It's God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

These three things are critical. God's people, in God's place, under God's rule. This is traced throughout the Bible. I don't have time to get through them, but I'll give you three examples. Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, ruled under God's word, His promise. You have the nation of Israel: God's people in God's place (the Promised Land), being ruled under God's law. And then the church, which is God's people, (we'll talk about God's place in a second), being ruled by God's Spirit and His word.

The question is – where do you visibly see the manifestation of a people who are ruled by God's word and Spirit? The answer is, you see it on earth in the gathering of His people in things called churches. So the church is the place in which you actually see the Kingdom of God on earth. This means, by extension, if you don't come to church, you should at least pause and ask yourself some hard questions, like how much do I value the Kingdom of God? You have to ask that question. If it's true that the church gathering is where we see the Kingdom of God most explicitly on earth, but then we decide that sleeping in or football are better, then we have to ask, Do I really consider the Kingdom of God as first importance?

Now, how you become God's people, and God's place and rule, we need to go to scripture to see how this fleshes out. Colossians 1:13-14, Paul writes:

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain [kingdom, or rule] of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So Paul lays out for us the concept that there are two kinds of kingdoms. There is a kingdom which is ruled by darkness or sin and evil. Then there is the kingdom of God's beloved Son, which is God's kingdom. Not everyone is born into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. In fact, only those who get transferred from the domain of darkness, into the kingdom of His beloved Son, are actually citizens of His kingdom. So that means, unless you somehow get transferred to the kingdom of God, you are not in the kingdom of God. Your default position is, you are ruled by darkness (sin and evil). That is what the Bible teaches – that everyone has sinned and falls short of the glory of God. Everyone is born in sin.

Now, if you notice, being transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son means we have redemption, we have forgiveness of sins. So the kingdom of God is characterized by the forgiveness of sins. The question is, how do you get your sins forgiven, and thus be transferred from the domain of darkness, to the kingdom of His beloved Son? How does that happen?

Revelation 5:9-10

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you [Jesus] to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed [purchased] 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.”

So Jesus was killed, and the blood that was shed was a ransom, by which He purchases people for Himself. This people whom God purchases by the blood of Jesus, come from every tongue, tribe, nation and people group – literally every kind of human being on planet earth. Those blood-bought people are not GIVEN a kingdom; they are MADE a kingdom. Those blood-bought people will reign (kingdom language) on earth. Now that last bit may be confusing and you may be asking, how do we reign on earth? Well, that's one of those things we're projecting, the new heavens and new earth. I know that some people believe there is a spiritual salvation and an earthly salvation, two distinct things. But no, Jesus said, “all authority on heaven on earth was given to Me.” There are two poles. He's saying from Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, heaven and earth. God encompasses all things and we will rule and reign in the new heavens and new earth because there we will be kings and priests, living in God's kingdom.

Jesus put it (John 18:36-37). Jesus is having a discussion with Pontius Pilate. I say “discussion” because really, He is being interrogated. Pontius Pilate asked, “Are you really the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered:

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

So I would summarize it: God's people are the blood-bought people over whom God rules as their redeemer.

Now where do we find God's blood-bought people, gathering under the authority or headship of Jesus Christ? It is literally called "the church." In Ephesians 4, Jesus is the head of His body, the church. The church is the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God. I am not saying that the Kingdom of God IS the church, I am saying that in the church, you have a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. It's the place where God rules by His Spirit and by His word, over His people, as His people gather for praise and glory of God. So if you want to experience what, in part, the Kingdom of God is going to be like, or what it is like, your involvement in a local church is going to be the best way.

I know that sounds goofy. You might think, being a member at like, a gym and like, the church – it feels like the same thing. Well, it isn't. The church ought to be comprised of people as diverse as possible because the people of God are supposed to be a blood-bought people from every tongue, tribe, nation and people group. What I love about Golden Hills Church, is that God has seen fit, by His grace, to gather a wide variety of people. We have many languages spoken in our church. We have many people from different nations in our church, as it ought to be.

So not only are you gathering with people who are unlike you, but also, you are gathering with people who share the same experience that you have, of being saved by grace through faith. When people gather in a church and they only want to worship who are just like them, or they only want to worship with people who vote like them, spend their money like them, vacation like them, dress like them, talk like them - - you are asking for an experience of this world, but Jesus says "My kingdom is not of this world." So the diversity that we ought to experience in church, gives us a flavor for what the Kingdom of Heaven is going to be like when the new heavens and new earth come in finality and fullness. As we read in Revelation 21 and 22, it's amazing. Because even the cultures of the nations will be brought into the new heavens and new earth. Ohhh! That's good!

We'll be doing a series on the church in the Fall, so we'll get back to it then.

The second question: **When did the Kingdom come?** We've kind of already answered this. It has already been inaugurated, but it is not yet consummated. I mean, Jesus already said (Matthew 4:17), "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Jesus already announced that when He came, the Kingdom of God has come. The way He proved it was through what He did, by way of miracles. For instance, when He was casting out demons, He said this in Luke 11:20

²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

In other words, the reason why Jesus does miracles, was not because it was an evangelistic technique. He does the miracles because it proves that He is the Messiah. He is the Lord of all creation.

This leads to other questions. If the Kingdom of God is already here and among us, then why do we experience things like sin, and injustice, and hunger, and evil and various other things? If you are not asking this question, you're not thinking seriously about these topics. If the Kingdom of God is seen in and through the church, how exactly is that possible, if people in the church sin against each other? And practice injustice? And turn a blind eye to hunger? And don't give a rip about social inequality? How is that possible?

The answer would be, you have to remember that the Kingdom of God has already come, but it is not yet fully here. Not fully. There is more coming. You may not believe that, so let me prove it. Think about the perplexities that we find in scripture all over the place. I'll give you a few examples. Remember, already/not yet. The Kingdom is already here but not yet fully.

Ephesians 2 says that we are saved by grace. No debate there. Yet we read in Romans 13 that says, "Salvation is nearer than when we first believed." Wait – so are we saved? Or is it near? Yes!

Colossians 1, we've seen, says "We have been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son." Yet Galatians 5 says that we are going to receive a kingdom. So were we transferred? Or are we yet to receive it? Yes!

Galatians 4 says that we've been adopted, yet Romans 8 says we await our adoption. Yes!

See where I'm going with this? Or you have Hebrews 10, "we've already been perfected for all time" yet Galatians 3 says, "We are still being perfected."

The reality is, the Kingdom of God has already come, but is not yet fully here. Therefore, we are saved. We are perfected. We are adopted. We're being saved. We're not yet adopted. We haven't received the kingdom yet. Because it's not yet here! Which is the reason why we pray, "Your Kingdom come." It's not as if the Kingdom of God is not already here. We're praying that it would come more fully.

How does the Kingdom of God come more fully now? That is our third question. Here's our answer: it comes as God's people preach the gospel to all people, by which God's Spirit produces life and obedience. So the Kingdom of God comes more fully now, as God's people, the church, preach the gospel, which centers on the person of Jesus – about His life, death and resurrection. And as we preach, we're told (as in Acts) that the Holy Spirit uses that speech act as the means by which He grants new life to people so that they are born again. Remember John 3, Jesus said, "Unless you are born again, you will not see nor enter the Kingdom of God." So you have to be born again. The Holy Spirit is the only way to be born again. How do we receive the Holy Spirit, to cause us to be born again? We have to hear the gospel (Ephesians 1:13) and we have to repent and believe it. In so doing, the Kingdom of God actually comes now, more fully, because those who have been bought by Jesus, are born again by the Holy Spirit, and the same Holy Spirit who gives them life also empowers them to live in obedience.

Now there are at least two ways to not bring the Kingdom of God more fully now. They are the two most popular ways most people think is the way to do it! So I need to point this out. I'm going to be totally stereotypical. I know I'll get emails! There is a theologically liberal approach and a theologically conservative approach to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The theologically liberal approach, typically is this: we're going to bring the Kingdom of God on earth through humanitarian efforts and good works, where we will love people and usher in this love fest and everyone will be happy. The theological liberal approach basically says that you can bring the Kingdom of God in if you just love people enough and serve them enough and do good enough. Then the Kingdom of God will come. No. That kind of mentality, what we're really saying is, the whole purpose of God coming is to help you become a better version of yourself. If we can just help people become better versions of themselves, then the Kingdom of God will come. Because the Kingdom of God is really about you, maximizing your inner potential. Therefore, God is not infinitely sovereign; He is just infinitely resourceful. He is like Costco. You

just go to Costco and get what you need. There is a lot of stuff. So go to God. He has a lot of stuff.

Now there is also the theologically conservative approach, which is a temptation equally as strong, in a different direction. It is basically this kind of idea – the Kingdom of God can actually be ushered in here on earth through political power and through cultural influence. So some people have it in their minds that if we just vote the right candidate in, and support the right kinds of social issues, then we can usher in the Kingdom of God. For instance, if we can get prayer back in our schools, and Bibles and 10 Commandments everywhere, the Kingdom of God will naturally flow.

No, and here is the problem. Good works and humanitarian work, love and service, political action, sociological influences – all those things are good things. They are not unimportant. Did everyone hear what I just said? Because this is where you've already checked out and you are going to write me an email. You can't believe I just said that.

A flourishing, healthy human society must have humanitarian good works and love, and it also must have a good political system and cultural influences where we are pursuing human flourishing. It has to have those. Here's the problem: none of those things can actually usher in the Kingdom of God because none of those things can transform the human heart. None of them. The only way a person's heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh, is if they are circumcised by the Holy Spirit, which is to say, if they hear the gospel and repent and believe it.

So no number of perfect candidates, no amount of perfect loving service will ever usher in the Kingdom of God. The only way for the Kingdom of God to come is if human hearts are transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved Son, by being purchased by the blood of Jesus, and through the indwelling Holy Spirit, to be adopted into the family of God, and that same Holy Spirit empowers them to live obedient to what God has commanded. In other words, the church has to preach the gospel to all people by which God's Spirit will produce life and obedience. In no other way is the Kingdom of God ever going to come upon earth. (applause)

I am saying – we are praying for the great commission to be fulfilled. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. All nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Brothers and sisters, many of us are all kinds of hot and bothered about the culture we live in. Many of us are pursuing humanitarian works, and loving service. We think – this will do it. Or we're all hot and bothered and think – I just need this candidate, or this political action – and that will do it. And the one thing that often times many churches neglect, is the one thing that actually does it! It's when God's people faithfully preach God's word. That's the only way.

I love Romans 1. Many people kind of scoot over Romans 1:1-6, because it is entitled "Greetings." Typically we think of letters. And we skip over the greeting to get to the good stuff. I want to say – this is the good stuff! Let me read it, and I'll point out some major things in here. Paul writes (listen for Great Commission, Lord's Prayer, Hallowed by Your name, gospel – that kind of stuff. Listen for it intently, look for it. It's there, everywhere) --

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ

Let me go back and revisit the main points in my own words. Listen to the first six verses of Romans 1 and see if you can hear “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” the Great Commission, and those kinds of things. Listen.

Paul was called to be a messenger (an apostle). God set him apart for the gospel of God. The gospel was promised in the Old Testament through the prophets, and the gospel was concerned chiefly with God’s Son. God’s Son is a descendant of David, in accordance with the Davidic Covenant, confirming that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is declared God’s Son by the Spirit of Holiness, and how the Spirit declares, makes this declaration, is through His resurrection from the dead. And through Jesus we all receive grace, but Paul has specially received his apostleship, or messengership. Paul was sent as a messenger to preach the gospel with the aim of bringing about the obedience of faith. This is all for the sake of God’s name (hallowed by Your name), therefore the gospel ministry of the church is to happen among all nations.

That’s a recounting of those verses.

So therefore, we as God’s people, who are called the church, are to preach the gospel to all peoples. By that preaching, God’s Spirit will declare Christ to be the Son of God, and produce life and obedience for God’s namesake. When this happens, the Kingdom of God comes. This is the church’s telos. This is the church’s purpose. This is the church’s function. This is what the church was designed to do and be. Therefore, the purpose for which we corporately exist as a church, the purpose for which we exist is to pray that God’s kingdom would come, but then also to get about doing the work of gospel ministry, so that God’s kingdom will actually come.

Sometimes we need to answer our own prayers. I mean this: when you meet someone and they are in need, I need \$10 for whatever. And you have \$10 in your pocket. You say, “Really? Let me pray for you, that God will supply your need.” Don’t you know that God has already supplied their need? His \$10 is already in your pocket. Sometimes we have to answer our own prayers.

When we pray “Your kingdom come,” sometimes we need to just get busy and have the kingdom come through gospel ministry.

So why do we pray “Your kingdom come”?

Well, we pray for God to continue bringing His kingdom through the gospel ministry of His church, among all peoples. The reason why we pray “Your kingdom come,” is we are praying for God to continue bringing His kingdom through the gospel ministry of His church, among all peoples. Therefore, we are on mission to go to the nations, for it is “all peoples” who must hear the gospel. We must be a church which is committed to the supremacy of Christ and the gospel, for there is no other means, under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved, than Jesus Christ alone. AND, we must be praying for it because we don’t bring the Kingdom of God

in our own power; it is God who brings the Kingdom of God. We pray for God to bring the Kingdom of God through us, not because of us.

I once heard this illustration. It is as if Jesus wrote the greatest musical composition of all time. Now, we as the church, having been captivated by His music, now perform His music as musicians before all the world, which is full of Muzak and cacophony.

In other words, we pray because the world is in need. What the world needs most is not love or politics, but Jesus. And people get Jesus when Jesus' people give people Jesus.

It's kind of like this. This is going to be a shaming thing. I sometimes hear folks say, "Oh, my goodness! Do you see the next generation? These kids are terrible! What's wrong with them?" Yet at the same time, we lack volunteers and ministry partners in children's ministry and student ministry all the time. Sometimes I get overwhelmed by that and I think – *Lord, what if we as a people quit bemoaning things, and just got busy getting our hands dirty in gospel ministry? What if we actually disciplined our children? What if we actually gave the kids in our church the gospel? What if we actually labored with them?* Oh, how we've been praying all weekend for our counsellors who are up at middle school winter camp this weekend, that God would use them powerfully in the ministry of the gospel to bring many of those kids to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Oh, that we would get busy!

Here is what N.T. Wright says about praying "Your Kingdom come." This is kind of long. Hang with me. I'll make it interesting. He says:

Praying "Your Kingdom come" means for a start, that as we look up into the face of our Father in heaven and commit ourselves to the hallowing of His name, that we look immediately out upon the world that He made, and see it as He sees it. "Thy Kingdom come." To pray this means seeing the world in binocular vision. That is, we see it with the love of the creator for the spectacularly beautiful creation, but we also see it with the deep grief of the creator for the battered and battle-scarred state in which the world now finds itself. Put these two things together, and bring the binocular picture into focus. What do you see? The love and grief. They join together into a Jesus-shaped, kingdom-shaped, dare I say – they come to be the shape of the cross. With this Jesus before your eyes, pray again, "Your Kingdom come." We are praying for the redemption of the world, for the radical defeat and uprooting of evil. For heaven and earth to be married at last. For God to be all-in-all. And if we pray this way, we must of course be prepared to live this way. So we pray this for the world and we also pray it for the church. But this cannot simply mean that we want God to sort out our messes so that the church can be a cozy little place without problems or pains. We can only pray this prayer for the church if we are prepared to mean it. Here is what we mean: Lord, make us a kingdom. Make us a community of healed healers. Make us a people who are rescued rescuers. Make us a fine-tuned orchestra to play the kingdom music for the whole world to hear. Make us in turn, servants of our Lord and Christ and King, for we are the few that have a message for the many.

The Kingdom of God is not exclusively spiritual or physical. It is actually both. We are a blood-bought people. What God has for us, as blood-bought people, is to bring His kingdom in, not by our own creativity and ingenuity, but He has already given us how to do it. That is, when His blood-bought people share Christ, the gospel. And when we, in sharing the gospel, go to the nations and proclaim it, then the Kingdom of God comes for the Holy Spirit will come upon all those whom God has chosen, and they will be adopted and they will be empowered to live

obediently. And in that way, God gets all the glory, and these people who thought their joy was in their stuff, will find out that their truest and everlasting joy is a person, not a thing. And they will see Jesus as all-satisfying. So we pray, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

I want to say this real quickly, about God's will. What does Jesus mean, "Your will be done"? In the Bible, there are three conceptions of God's will.

God's **sovereign will**, which is to say God does whatever God wants to do. We see that in Isaiah 46:10,

¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

God is not saying that He simply knows everything. He is saying, *I declare everything. According to the counsel of my will, I will do what I'm going to do.*

The second will of God is the **preceptive will**. You've probably heard of "precepts". You read it in Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, talking about God's commands and precepts. It means God's commands. It's the way God regulates His people. Think, Ten Commandments, for instance. In the New Testament, you see it in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Literally, God's will for you is that you would be sanctified. Literally. That is why we pray for each other's sanctification, so we can be praying in accordance with God's will.

Then the third one, **dispositional will**. God's disposition. What pleases or displeases God. I'll give you a quick example. Ezekiel 18:4. God says:

⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

He says, in 18:23, God says:

²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the LORD GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

So on one side, God says, *if you sin, you will die*. And then on the other hand, God says, *do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked?*

So therefore, there are some things that please God, and other things that displease God. That is God's dispositional will. God doesn't want people to die, but just because He doesn't want them to die, does not mean that they don't die. Because there are three concepts of God's will.

When Jesus says, "Your will be done," what is He referring to? He isn't talking about sentiments like "God will be happy if this happens." Nor is He talking about God's sovereign will because remember, God's sovereign will always happens. Instead, He is praying for the preceptive will of God, that is, *God, Your will be done. People will obey Your commandments.* That is what He is praying for.

Notice He says, "on earth as it is in heaven." What's going on in heaven right now? The angels and the glorified believers are obeying God. Serving God. There is no sin in heaven. There is no rebellion in heaven. So therefore, Jesus is encouraging us to pray as there is no sin or rebellion in heaven, we are praying that among God's people, there would be sanctification and there would be no sin and no rebellion. We are praying for the Kingdom of God to come, and for God's people to be sanctified. For God's people to become holy. So that way, His people will not be known as rebellious lawbreakers, but His people will be known as obedient children.

You may say, wait a minute! That sounds like legalism! No, check it out. Paul was commissioned to be an apostle for the gospel to bring about the *obedience of faith*. We are tasked to go to the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching all that I have commanded. For what reasons? So that people would obey.

Repentance and faith come first. What follows is the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence which empowers us to live holy lives. So we are praying, *God, save people through the gospel! And once they are saved in the gospel, and receive the Holy Spirit, cause them to live in faithful obedience.*

In that way, God will get the glory.

I have other verses which would be helpful, but I'm out of time. That's extra credit.

Before we go, let's stand together as a church and let us recite the Lord's prayer.

Jesus said, Pray then like this;

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

God bless you guys! Love you guys! See you next week.