

“Your Will Be Done in Heaven and Earth”

Matthew 6:10, February 9, 2020; 10:00 am
Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO
Rev. Rebecca K. Poos

PRAYER

God of wisdom and insight,
May the words that I speak, and the ways
they are received by each of our hearts
and minds, help us continue to grow into
the people, and the church, that you
have dreamed us to be. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER (MATTHEW 6:9-13)

Matthew 6:9-13 Names of God Bible (NOG)

⁹“This is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,

let your name be kept holy.

¹⁰Let your kingdom come.

Let your will be done on earth
as it is done in heaven.

¹¹Give us our daily bread today.

¹²Forgive us as we forgive others.

¹³Don’t allow us to be tempted.

Instead, rescue us from the evil one.^[a]

I. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS HOLY

Last week we began with the opening phrase of this,
the Greatest Prayer.

“Our Father, who art in Heaven.....”

We reflected on who God is. Our Father, our Mother,
our Householder, the one who makes sure we are well
cared for, fed, have a roof over our heads. So much
more than a biological father, but Creator, Protector,
Provider and Model.

“Father of Us All”—not just *my Father*, or Lord over
my group, my tribe, my faith tradition.

“Hallowed be Thy Name”

Our Father Mother God is *holy*. Hallowed. Divine and
mysterious yet close and personal, all at the same
time. More than we can imagine or grasp. Like Moses,
we remember that, when in God’s presence, we are
only Holy Ground, and humble ourselves and take off
our shoes and preconceptions. Like Job, we
remember when we say these words that God is God
and we are not.

We never can fully know this One. And that’s a *good*
thing! We cannot put God in a box. Can’t decide that
how *we* name and think of God as the *only* way.

But, there’s a holy tension there, too, because God is
as close and personal as a loving parent. God is the
one we can be turn to when we need comfort,
companionship, guidance on the journey.

We learned that the Lord's Prayer has a political edge. "You, oh God are Father, *not* Caesar. You, oh God, are Holy and we pray: "*YOUR* kingdom come, not Rome!" Render the obedience and respect to Caesar what is due Caesar but hallow and worship God above all.

We also learned some "fun facts" about the Lord's Prayer and how central it has been to the life of Christians for millennia, all over the world.

Anyone use it for a timer in their cooking this week?

This week I learned a not-so-fun fact that I don't remember ever hearing:

Martin Luther King, Jr's mother was shot down, assassinated, why playing the organ in church. And, what was she playing? None other than The Lord's Prayer.

My clergy colleagues have been talking about this prayer, as I asked them for insights for this series. One pastor in Longmont said she had no insights to share, just a funny story.

Personal story: In my first year of ordained ministry(as an associate), I did a sermon on the Lord's Prayer and included four versions in the bulletin with a challenge to use each version in devotions during the week and see if it changed the person's experience. Only response? A call to the senior minister from a member who had "heard about" the sermon, wanting to know what right the UCC had to **change** the Lord's Prayer!

II. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

Your Kingdom come!

If I asked you, "What is the Kingdom" of God," what would you say? What do you think of when you hear that term?

Believe it or not, the "Kingdom of God" is the central theme of Jesus' message. He speaks of the Kingdom more than *any* other topic: love, money, healing, challenging the powerful, relationships.

Why? Because all those other things—so important—values and teachings and the ways to live in this world and get along—they are all wrapped up in the blanket that is the Kingdom. If we "live in the Kingdom" and the "Kingdom of God is within us, as Jesus teaches, then all those other things fall into place.

Seek ye first, the Kingdom of God

And God's righteousness

And all these things will be added unto you.

The Kingdom of God is mentioned in scripture—by Jesus, and by the writings of the Early Church, more times than we can count. Lots of statistics floating around about that—if you want a fun homework project—tell us next week *how many times* the Kingdom of God is mentioned in scripture.

III. WHAT DOES THE KINGDOM LOOK LIKE?

So, what does life in this “Kingdom of God” look like? It’s also been called “The Realm of God.” “The Rule of God.” More recently, theologians have termed it “the *Kindom* of God, as a more accurate term. Because it’s not really a physical monarchy like we understand kingdom, but a family, a community, a holy household. Let’s take a quick snapshot of what the Kindom looks like, according to Scripture:

It is Mysterious --

Jesus used parables because it was so mysterious. He needed to put it into everyday life and situations so we could understand.

The Kindom is a game-changer!

Healing happens and demons are cast out.

Healing is a sign of the Kingdom of God coming near.

We are healed and free to be our true, authentic selves. Whole selves.

It’s a place, a realm, where the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the sick and imprisoned are visited. (Mt 25)

Where the Lion lies down with the Lamb (Isaiah)

A place where the birds find shade. A place to nest and rest. A haven.

It’s Leaven. Faith that spreads—like the tiny mustard seed. Sometimes the leaven is hiding while it’s doing its thing! Fermenting and fomenting!

Like seeds—seeds that fell on all sort of surfaces and different kinds of soil and had different kinds of results. But they all do SOMETHING!

The Kingdom is “In your midst,” not big flashy signs. (Luke 17)

Where we, God’s people, put our heart and soul into building bridges instead of walls.

Jesus says the Kindom is not just about the afterlife. Some will see it before they die. (Luke 9)

It’s a place where you see things happening! When Jesus was asked, “Are you the one who we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking?” He replied: “What do you see? Are the lame walking? The blind seeing, the eyes and ears of the close-minded opened? Neighbor being loved, the widow, orphan and immigrant finding love and care?”

The Kindom is, as we’ve been exploring in Colossians 3: When we, as God’s beloved, love our friends, neighbors and even enemies. When we clothe ourselves with mercy, compassion, humility, meekness and prayer.

When we are bearing with one another, up-building one another, forgiving one another, just as the Lord forgives us.

When the Church is living and being all it can be, that is a way for others to see life under the kingdom.

What life in the faith and community, guided by the love of God in Christ *ought* to be like.

“The church is meant to “model” God’s rule with mercy and justice.” To usher in the Kingdom—be God’s guinea pigs!

There are many different approaches and understandings of what “The Kingdom of God” means in our world and lifetime. Some believe it’s really only the afterlife. Or, that it’s kind of here and among us now, but has a ways to go. Like, it won’t be fully realized until we truly learn to love our neighbor.

Or, that it’s the “now and the not yet.” That it will only be fulfilled with the second coming of Christ. Others believe that it’s now and not yet, but up to us to work *with* God, co-creating the realm of God here and now and not waiting for something supernatural.

When we pray, “Thy Kingdom Come”—we ask God to “bring it on,” while also committing ourselves to be on the team *with* God to make it so.

IV. THY WILL BE DONE

When I was in college and had my first boyfriend, John, we were quite the devout young Christians, and would share daily devotionals and pray together. One night we’d read our devotional, joined hands and were praying.

I prayed, “God, I’m coming down with a cold and would pray for healing, but if it’s your will, then....”

John jumped in (kinda rude, I thought!) and said, “How could it be God’s will for you to be sick?! Do you think God *wills* you have a cold?”

This sudden interruption—to my prayer and my belief system left me wrestling with this my whole life!

We say “Thy will be done” a lot—as if resigning ourselves to a fickle God and not really thinking through what we’re saying or praying.

A wise friend and spiritual guide wrote to me one day:

"Thy will be done." is not a statement of retreat or conciliation--but an "on tiptoes" eagerness to see what the Father is doing in (and with) you.

That's been life changing for me! I've always seen it as such resignation—like Eeyore! Oh well. Life is not going as I'd hoped, but “Thy will be done.”

What if we turned it around and joined with God in close relationship, in divine oneness with our holy, loving God, joining hands as it were, and declared: “Thy will be done! Bring it on! Let’s see what we can do—bringing fierce love to reign and rule—on earth *and* in Heaven.

Thy Will be done is teamwork. Co-creating our lives with Christ. Boing on tiptoes in every moment and in every prayer—eagerly awaiting, with excitement and great hope—to see what God in Christ will do with us and for the world.

Another big part of my youth and young faith journey, was this song, “Thy Will Be Done.” We sang it in high school and college and beyond. I used to sing it in a spirit of resignation—almost grief—thinking it was God’s will that bad things happened to good people. It was written at the time of death of a young person, I believe.

Pray this prayer with me as I sing—listening through new ears and lenses—

“Sometimes the load is heavy,

and sometimes the road is long....

But we are not alone, and we are not left helpless and hopeless—but hopefull and Christ-filled. Expectant! Eagerly waiting to see what God wants to do with us and in us.

Thy Kingdom come

Thy will be done

On earth as it is in Heaven.

And let it begin with us—together—with God. Amen.