



**Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford**

**Let's Pray - Jan. 13/14 - Jeff Bucknam**  
**The Disciple's Prayer - (Matthew 6:9-10)**

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

I was at a podcast this week. Some of you might not know that we do a podcast every week here called the *Extra Podcast* and I am often on it. This week we were talking about a number of different things and I shared a story on the podcast that I wanted to share with you as well. When I was a young guy, we had, at our school (the elementary school that I was attending), we had to sell those chocolate bars. You parents know the chocolate bars. You have a lot of them in the back of your cupboards still, right? Because every year your kid says, "Hey, it's a fundraiser," and they don't go out and do anything, so you buy them all [laughter]. Well, these chocolate bars-- my mom was not that kind, so she sent us and said, "Listen, if you're going to sell these, the best place to do it is at the grocery store, just at the front, you know? They are probably not going to shoo away little kids like you guys." So we went down to the local grocery store (me and my two friends) and we started to sell these chocolate bars. Things were going okay. Sometimes people would buy, often times they would pretend they didn't hear you or whatever and then you'd start to cry and use whatever tools you could use to try to sell more chocolate bars. There was a radio-- I remember there was like-- this was early days of like "Walkman" and stuff like that, so I was going to get a walkman if I won the prize. So we were all after the walkman. This guy came up to us after we had said to him, "We'd like to sell you these chocolate bars. Would you like to buy 1 or 80?" and he said, "Here's the thing, I don't want to buy a chocolate bar, but here's a little card, and if you say the line on this card every time before you offer somebody a chocolate bar, they will do it." We were like, "What?" And he said, "Yeah, yeah, this is like a mantra that speaks things out into the universe and it brings return." He was dead serious. We looked at it-- I can't even remember what it said, it was just a line that he had on these little cards that he passed out. So if you want something, you say this line and then you ask for it. So we started to do this. We said the line and then asked for it and of course we started thinking, "Oh, the sales are turning." Not really, but every time it happened we were like, "It's because of the card!" and we were dancing around and being thrilled about it.

This was my first foray into that kind of world, though. Growing up kind of as a nominal Christian before, I didn't know that there were people who said that there were certain kinds of things that you could do in the universe, certain kinds of prayers you could pray to God or the gods or to the universe, that would return you some kind of good thing. If you are connected at all with our culture these days you will know that there is a very famous book, in fact, that argues this way. It's a book that Oprah loves and she touts frequently. It's called *The Secret*. The book is by a woman named Rhonda Byrne. I



am *not* recommending the book. The book's argument is essentially-- before I give you the argument, there's 30 million copies in print, 52 languages, and it argues the law of attraction. It's the belief that if you say something or declare something in your mind or verbally, that it's positive into the universe, what you will get in return is positive things. So, you want a car? Say it. "I want a car." But be specific, right? "A Tesla", right? You don't want the Corolla, you want the Tesla [laughter]. And it will come back to you. The law of attraction. If somebody comes up to you and says to you, "No, that's not true," or, "Are you sure?" just don't listen to them. Only be positive and it will return to you, whatever it is that you have caused the universe to attract with your positive thoughts and words. Here's a quote from the book:

"It's exactly like placing an order from a catalogue. ... You must know that what you want is yours the moment you ask. See yourself living in abundance and you will attract it. It works every time, with ever person."

For some of us that is a little bit odd. But you know, if you've grown up anywhere else in the world, you'll know that the idea of figuring out how to get something from-- to control the universe or to get something from the universe, the gods, God himself, how do you pray or how do you speak so that it works, so that we can have some kind of control? This is the question-- this is why witch doctors exist in places like Africa and other places. It's because they promise, "Listen, if you do these things, if you follow this order, pray this prayer, say this mantra, you'll get what you ask."

The Church has had its own approaches to this, quite honestly. We've adopted some of our practices to go along with some of that. I mean, that law of attraction is something you'll find in lots and lots of churches these days. People will say, "If you speak out, decree and declare it, *The Secret* is also a Christian idea. If you speak out things, but this time instead of speaking to the universe you are speaking to God, and he will return it to you. You need to decree and declare these things." There was a book in 2000 that most of you (I'm assuming) will have known about - *The Prayer of Jabez*? Do you remember this little prayer? Nobody is nodding. Yes you did. Shame on you [laughter]. No. The subtitle of Bruce Wilkinson's book, *The Prayer of Jabez*, was "Breaking Through to the Blessed Life." The idea was that if you said this prayer out of 1 Chronicles 4, tucked away in the middle of-- "This is the secret prayer that will get God to enlarge your boundaries. It's why God put it in the Bible, so that you would pray this prayer," and people started to treat it like a mantra-- you'd say that, put it on a mirror and speak it out every morning and the Lord will answer it. How do you get from God what you want? How do we pray?

It's interesting, however, that there's a place in the Bible that actually talks about how we should pray. Jesus himself says those words: "This, then, is how you should pray." So I would think that would be the first place we'd go to find out what kinds of things we should be interested in when we pray. We're in the middle of a series called *Let's Pray* and this is probably the central passage in the Bible about prayer, in my opinion. It's the one place that Jesus actually addresses the subject absolutely head on. It's in Matthew 6 in The Sermon on the Mount. I want to read to you verses 7-13. We're only going to study a couple of these verses, but here's the prayer itself: Jesus says in Matthew 6:7-13,



**“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for you Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray [not like the babbling pagans who repeat mantras. Not them. But this, then, is how you should pray]: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”**

Now, I read that entire section so that you could see, at the very beginning, that this is one of those prayers that is sometimes treated like the prayer of Jabez or a mantra. Lots and lots of people do this. I watch this T.V. show that follows a Junior College football team around. Before every game they get together and they say The Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name...” right before they go out and cuss and swear and try to beat the living snot out of each other, right? [Laughter] Madonna, before her shows, used to stand in the back stage and say The Lord’s Prayer, right? You *can* treat this like a mantra, but that’s *not* what Jesus intends. Don’t be like the pagans, you don’t need to say it all the time in exactly these words, it’s not the secret message that’s going to return to you favour - none of that. Instead, this prayer gives you an indication of what God cares about and what you ought to care about when you pray.

So look, there are six statements here. That should frighten you because you’re like, “Oh my goodness, he’s not going to get through six.” You’re right. We’re going to do three this week and three next week, right? “Phew, bullet dodged.” So here are the first three of these, okay? Three lines. We are just going to do the first two verses. These are all Godward statements at the very beginning here, before next week when we get into some of the things that have to do with us.

[Our Father in Heaven]

Here’s the first: “This, then, is how we should pray:” it starts, “Our Father in heaven.” “Our Father” is an interesting tag for God. Most commentators believe that that statement, “Father,” is a translation into Greek of the Aramaic, which is the language Jesus would have spoken, of the word “Abba.” “Abba” is an Aramaic word. Jesus walked around and he would speak Aramaic, but the New Testament is written in Greek, and so most commentators think, “Oh, what Matthew is doing here is taking that Aramaic word ‘Abba’ and he’s translating it into Greek”, so what’s behind this is this idea that God is a daddy. That’s what that means. It’s not a formal term. It means, “He is my daddy.” It’s an interesting image. It’s one that we refer to frequently here.

These last couple weeks I had the opportunity to send my son-- it’s Christmas morning, right? One of our gifts to my oldest son, who is 17 years old, was to send him away to Los Angeles (never to return). No, we just sent him away for a little while to see his friend. He and another friend went to see their friend in Los Angeles for a little while. Couple days after Christmas, my other son was feeling really sad about it and I was like, “You know what, if there are really cheap flights...” Sometimes they will have



last minute flights down there or whatever. “If there are really cheap flights, we will go down too and we’ll do something.” Right? Because I’m cold and I want to be warm. So we looked online and they were like \$125 or something and I was like, “Done! We’ll go to Los Angeles for a few days.” So we went down. My oldest son was down there already and my other son and I went down to spend time by ourselves, but there was this one particular night where we went to see my other son, whom I haven’t seen for, you know, a week at this point. I remember seeing him-- I drove to the location where he was and we brought *In-n-Out Burger* so that he, you know, would welcome us more warmly [laughter]. We met him, he was on the side of the street and was on his phone talking to me as we were driving. He was waving at me and, I don’t know, dads, when you see your kids and you haven’t seen them for a little while, there’s like this spur in your heart and it kind of leaps a little bit. Honestly, I found myself wanting to jump out of the car while it was still moving and run across and give a big hug to my 17 year-old man-boy, you know [laughter]? I went inside. I made sure I was sitting right next to him. I kept wanting to talk to him but we were watching a basketball game. I wanted to talk to him about all sorts of things. My sons and my daughter have no idea how I feel about them. I try to tell them that, but the words just aren’t enough. I can’t express how I feel about them. I’m their father. I’m their daddy. There’s nobody else in the world that can call me daddy but those three. What’s crazy about that idea is that I believe that’s what the Lord wants me to think about when I think about his love for me. That when he sees you there is a leap in his heart of joy. He’s delighted with his children. “Yeah, but I’m not great.” Yes, I know you’re not great. I’m not great either, but he has pinned his heart to us. He’s our Father.

My little girl, my eight year old, this week was saying to me that she didn’t have enough money to buy these books that she gets from school. They send home the little papers and you get to buy the books, you know? You tick off the things that you want and she had circled like four different things and she was partially in tears because she’s saying, “I’ve been working so hard at home to try to earn money, but I haven’t gotten enough.” I pulled her onto my lap and I said, “But honey, you haven’t asked me yet.” She looked at me, [with a look of awe] “Would you?” and I said, “Of course I will. Don’t you know that you should always ask your daddy.” Right, because I’m inclined toward her. That’s what it means to be a father. That’s what it means to be a daddy. That your heart is inclined toward your children. You’re looking for opportunities to bless them and give them good gifts. You delight, in fact, in it. When you understand that God is your daddy, when you say, “Our Father...” and you think for a little bit about the fatherness of God and how that relationship is with you, doesn’t it drive you to pray? When you go to God in prayer, you are not going to just God Almighty (you are - hold on and we’ll talk about that) but you are going to your Father, your daddy. You’re climbing up onto his knee and you’re saying, “Would you?”

Jesus, a little bit later in The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7), revisits this image about prayer again. Here’s Matthew 7:9-11: he says,

“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”



So you know how to give good gifts to your children even though you are wicked at heart. So multiply that ability of giving good gifts exponentially and you get what God is like. He always gives the right thing. When you ask for something that you shouldn't have, he doesn't give because he loves you too much. He's a good daddy. He's our father, but he's also in heaven. "Our Father in heaven..." He's separated from us. You're not in heaven. You don't exist in a place that is far above us like that. God does. He is, the word is, *transcendent*, he's all powerful.

A. W. Tozer, in one of his great-- he's an old pastor in the 1960's and he was a wonderful writer and wonderful thinker. He wrote a book called *The Knowledge of the Holy*, which I totally recommend you to read. It's about the character of God and in it he wrote these words about God's transcendence, about God's otherness. He said,

"In olden days men of faith were said to "walk in the fear of God" and to "serve the Lord with fear." However intimate their communion with God, however bold their prayers, at the base of their religious life was the conception of God as awesome and dreadful. This idea of God transcendent rims through the whole Bible and gives color and tone to the character of the saints. This fear of God was more than a natural apprehension of danger; it was a nonrational dread, an acute feeling of personal insufficiency in the presence of God the Almighty.

Wherever God appeared to men in Bible times the results were the same - an overwhelming sense of terror and dismay, a wrenching sensation of sinfulness and guilt. When God spoke, Abram stretched himself upon the ground to listen. When Moses saw the Lord in the burning bush, he hid his face in fear to look upon God. Isaiah's vision of God wrung from him the cry, 'Woe is me!' and the confession, 'I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.'"

If you were here on Christmas Eve this was one of my big points. This is who God is. The one who came near is also far. Way better. Not your buddy. You don't just stumble into the presence of the transcendent, almighty, all knowing, holy, holy, holy, one. You don't. You're not good enough. You don't have anything to do with him. This is the way the Bible talks about God, in these terms. He's in heaven, separated from us. There's this scene in the Old Testament, actually, where you have Moses, who wants to see God's face, right? He wants nearness. "Lord, show me your face," he says. God says, "I can't. I mean, if I did, you'd die. So what I'm going to do is I am going to hide you in this little rock over here and I'll go by, but you can't see my face. You can only see, when I go by, what comes behind me. I'm too great for you to even live after seeing me. That's the problem. You'd want to kill yourself."

"Our Father in heaven..." Do you see how those two things fit together? My point here is that our Father in heaven is our loving daddy *and* the one far above us. He is near *and* far. That's a tension that you need to hold together, because if you don't, if you emphasize one over the other, it will get you into all sorts of trouble. You'll have a false god in the end. He is both of those. So, for example, if you emphasize the farness of God over his nearness, if you speak of him as transcendent and mute his



imminence (his nearness), what you end up having is a god who is kind of capricious, you know? That means he runs the government of the world by just sheer decree and doesn't care about your feelings. Do you want to pray to this god? He's the god, quite honestly, of the hellfire-and-brimstone preacher. "Oh, you have nothing to do with this great and almighty God. Grovel before him." This is the image that you have of him. He's the god of Islam, he doesn't really care about you. He's powerful and mighty, but he doesn't really help you that much.

But if you do it the other way, if you emphasize his nearness over his far-ness (which, lets be honest, it's the way we go, right?) you have other problems. You end up thinking of him as little and incapable of doing things and you talk about God like he's your boyfriend. Just the way we do in our songs, right? Listen, at great risk of receiving many emails from you, I want to read to you a couple of songs, okay? I am going to just go for it. There is a kind of genre of 'Jesus is my boyfriend' music around these days and here are a couple of songs that you might love. But just listen to the lyrics, the way we sing about God.

"Draw me close to you. Never let me go. Cause nothing else can take your place. To feel the warmth of your embrace."

I said something similar to my wife when we first got married [laughter]. Here's another one:

"Forever in my heart, always on my mind [different song]. It's crazy how I think about you all of the time. I love the way you hold me, by my side you'll always be. You take each and every day, make it special in some way. I love you more than the words in my brain can express. I can't imagine even loving you less. [Jeanne...I mean] Lord, I love the way you hold me [laughter]."

Now listen, some of you are like, "I hate this church" [laughter]. Just hear what I'm trying to say to you here, okay? There was a movie back in the 1990's or early 2000's called *Bruce Almighty*, where God is this sort of janitor that-- "listen, if you got to do his job for a little while you'd realize how hard it is." This image of God is so beneath him. Yes, he is your loving father on whose lap you should climb up and ask for the world, but he's also dangerous. He's not safe. He governs the universe by the rule of his power. That's your God. So is he the one who is near. And you need to hold those two things together in your mind. When you do that, you will start to think, "Man, I want to pray to that God because not only is he inclined toward me because he's near, but he has the power to accomplish anything. He's not governed by the rules of this earth. He's in heaven and he can do what it is that I ask him to do. He's my father in heaven."

So let's imagine that you have a little child. You know what we do with the cookies when we have little children, is we put them on the top shelf. Whatever your cookies are - might be twizzlers or whatever. You put them away because your child loves them and if you leave it low they will eat them. So, if they want to get the cookies, what they have to do is either concoct a way to do it, by constructing a tower of chairs (which of course they can't maybe, when they're really little), or they have come to you and



ask. Now, when they come to you and they ask you to help them, they are believing two things about you, and the reason they have come to you and asked you is because they believe these two things. Number one, they believe you are inclined towards them, because if you're not, why ask? They believe that somewhere inside your heart is the desire to grab a cookie and give it to them. If they give you the puppy dog eyes they actually might get it. It's an inclination towards you because you are their mommy or their daddy. But also, they believe that you have an ability that they don't have. You dwell in a realm that they can't see, right? Above the counter [laughter]. So, these two character traits of you drive them to ask. That's why you should go to God, because he's your father in heaven. Both. You should glory in both. You should pray to that God. You should want to pray to him.

[Hallowed Be Your Name]

So, "Our Father in heaven..." - that's the first one. Here's the second one: "Hallowed be your name." That's a word that we don't use very much, right? "Hallowed" "These are the hallowed halls..." It's a good word though. It means glorious or made holy or set apart, famous, better. "Hallowed be your name." Someone's name is their reputation, so, "Great is your reputation." "May God, you be made famous among all people. May people look to you and think, 'You're amazing.'" That's what this prayer is essentially saying.

When I first came here on staff at Northview we went on a staff retreat and we were doing something called "ReFocus" where we were trying to figure out the future of the church at the time. I was the Young Adult's Pastor and we didn't have a Lead Pastor at the church, so we were trying to sort out together what we wanted to do in the future. We were up at this dingy cabin in Whistler. It was Whistler, but dingy, right? So we sat around and one of the questions they said was, "I want you to go and take three hours and I want you to answer this question." It was the leader who said this. "Can you answer what is your purpose in life?" So I went downstairs and I sat there and I thought, "Hmm." I had my pad of paper and my Bible open and all that kept running through my mind was my seminary education, where I had learned the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which is a document that was produced over five years by about 120 of the smartest people alive in the 1600's, okay? So they spent five years trying to answer the questions about theology. The first question was, "What is the chief end of man?" So I thought, "Okay, the smartest people alive spent five years doing this, I am not going to get any further than they are in three hours, so I'm just going to take what they said." So here's what they said:

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."

I remember when we came back and we shared all of these things, a couple people in the room said, "Hmm, that's good." I said, "Yeah, I know." "Did you come up with that?" "Yeah, I kind of did. No, not me." "...to glorify God and enjoy him forever." The chief end-- you go to the Bible and that's what it says. What is your purpose in life? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Purpose of every human being that has ever lived is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. That's our goal, but listen, that's also God's goal. What is the chief end of God? To glorify God and enjoy him forever. So you go to the



Scriptures and you find that. Why does God act the way he acts in the world? For the sake of his name.

Ezekiel 36:20-23. God is speaking to the Israelites about their history and why things have gone so horribly wrong and why he's acted on their behalf. He saved them, brought them across the red sea and then they just went haywire. Why does God keep coming back to them and serving them and helping them? Here we go:

**“And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them [by others, looking on], ‘These are the Lord’s people, and yet they had to leave his land. [If they were the Lord’s people they shouldn’t have to give up their land, right? If the Lord was really great, he would keep them in their land. Because they left and it must not be so great] I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. Therefore, say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them.’”**

**“See, like, I am really concerned about your hypocrisy. Not because of what it says about you, but what it says about me,” says the Lord. That’s the real danger, folks, with our hypocrisy, when it is that we don’t honor God with our lives. He has somehow pinned his name to us. We are his children, so as children, we ought to resemble our Father in heaven, so when the world looks on and sees us, they say, “What kind of God do they have?” So when you’re a hypocrite, when I’m a hypocrite, yes, it tarnishes my name. Somebody might go out and they’ll start saying mean things about me, but that’s not the worst part. The worst part is that it tarnishes Jesus’ name. I’ve always been shocked at how people-- I’ve had meetings with people before (Christians) who will be like, “Yeah, you know what? I’ve had this disagreement with this other Christian, so we’re going to go to court.” I’m like, “You know, the New Testament talks about having lawsuits between believers, right?” “Yeah, I know that, but this is how you get things done,” and my response at every turn is, “But what about the name of Christ?” Again, the real problem with our hypocrisy is not about what it does to our reputation, but what it does to God’s.**

I was watching a movie the other day called *Spotlight*. It won the Best Picture Award a few years ago. It’s actually a story about a division of the *Boston Globe* (which is a newspaper in Boston) and how they covered the priest sex-scandal in the Catholic Church and how so many people in the Boston area had overlooked this stuff for years. How these priests had been molesting kids for so long and had just been moved from one parish to another parish to another parish, under the noses of everybody, but nobody reported it. Finally, this group called Spotlight reported it. There’s a scene in the film where two of the characters (who are the reporters) are talking to each other and they’re saying to each other, “I went away from church and I always thought I’d go back, but I don’t think I can anymore because of what I’ve seen here.” It’s like, “I want to have a relationship with God, but





how can I when his people are so despicable?” That’s their language. As Christians, we watch that and cross our arms and say, “Yeah, but that’s not always the case.” Yes, but it is the case so often, isn’t it?

If you were a sceptic of Christianity and you had a business dealing with a particular person in the community who said that they were a Christian and it went sour because of their breaking of some contract or lying or whatever, if you were asked to go to church weeks, months, a year later, what are you inclined to say? “No way. Look, I don’t want to have anything to do with that God if those people are the ones who represent him.” His name should be hallowed. The real problem with my hypocrisy is not what it does to my reputation, but what it does to God’s. The root question that you have to ask-- when you pray this prayer, the thing that you should be asking is, “Okay, what do people think about God when they look at us? Do they profane his name, or is it hollowed?” When I’m praying for God’s name to be hallowed, I’m saying, “Lord, let my life, let the lives of my friends, the Christians, the Church, speak of your glory.” “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...”

[Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven]

Last one, at least for today, right? “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” I have a question for you. It’s a little theological question that will base in Scripture here, okay? So, if you go back to Matthew (we are in the book of Matthew as we’re studying this), if you go back to Matthew 4:17, this is the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. This is one of the first things that he says. He’s gone into the wilderness, Satan has tempted him, he’s come out of the wilderness, right? Here’s the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in the book of Matthew: he says, Matthew 4:17,

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Later on, the Pharisees (the religious leaders) are criticizing Jesus and saying to him, “You’re doing all these great works, you know, healing people and stuff, by the power of Satan himself. You’re casting out demons by the power of the Prince of Demons. That’s how you’re doing this.” That’s their explanation for it. Jesus comes to them and says, “Listen, in order to do that-- why would Satan be against himself? In order for someone to go into the house and to rob the house, they have to bind the owner of the house. So, if you see me casting out the demons, what you’ve seen is me walking into the house of Satan, binding the strong man, and plundering his house. And if you see that happening,” Jesus says, “You know the kingdom has come near.” So what’s he saying? He’s saying, “Listen, if I’m on the scene, so is the kingdom. You’ve waited, as people, for the kingdom of God to come. It has come in me right now.” That’s what he’s saying. So, the kingdom of God, according to Jesus, is a present reality, but, let me ask you my theological question. Why then, does in Matthew 6:10, the passage that we’re studying, does it say, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?” If the kingdom is already here, why would you have to pray for it to be here? Which is it? Is the kingdom here or is it coming? And the answer? “Yes”. Theologians, we talk about this as the already-not-yet nature of the kingdom. When you read Scripture, you get this idea that the kingdom,



yes, is already here, but it is not yet totally here and people are like, "What? How does that work?" Okay, well a little illustration usually helps here.

In the United States, when they elect a president, they usually elect the President in November of the year, okay? And barring any contesting of ballots and hanging chads and all that stuff, they will have a period between November and January where there's a new President whose been elected, and yet the old President is still there. So they are in between times. There's already a President (a new one), but not yet totally a new one. So what the Scriptures are saying about the kingdom of God is that we live between November and January. That, yes, Jesus is already the king and his kingdom is already here, but not yet totally here. We live between those times.

So there are two aspects to this prayer that are really great, okay? When we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we're recognizing first the "already" nature of the kingdom. Jesus has already won the victory. So when we pray that way, we say, "We want God to bring heaven to earth more, in our present reality." So if you come to our church and you receive prayer for healing in our Elder's meeting-- every month we pray for people. If you have any issue you can come and have Elders lay hands on you and we will pray for you. What we do when we're praying that is, frequently, I will stand over a person, put my hand on their back, and say to God, "Lord, would you bring your kingdom, because in heaven their situation doesn't exist. It will be cured. That's coming. Can you bring it forward just as you did in the life of Jesus when he's healing all sorts of people all over the place? Would you bring that kind of kingdom forward now?" We pray for healing that way. I have a little blog reader and I'll read headlines and stories-- there's so much in the newspaper these days and man, it is sad. You know what I find myself doing repeated as I am reading through all that stuff? I just keep saying over and over again, "Lord, your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. This is not the way it ought to be. Can you bring more of heaven to earth now?"

So that's part of the prayer when we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." But there's also a future and there's also a "not yet", you know? We're looking forward to January, when things are finally going to be put-- when the President, when the King, finally sits ultimately on his throne. He's already on the throne, but not totally on the throne. So, this is the way that the Bible talks in lots of places, like in Revelation. There's one final prayer in the Bible. Do you know what it is? Revelation 22:20:

**"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' [And then John, the writer of Revelation, adds his two bits in there. He says:] Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."**

You know, that's the prayer of every faithful Christian in the world. Listen, I'm going to tell you that if you don't find a deep seeded desire in your heart for the return of Christ, I don't know if you're a believer. I say that based not just on that passage, but on this one: 2 Timothy 4:6-8. It's the end of Paul's life and it's kind of his last words to his protegee Timothy. He says, in 2 Timothy 4:6-8,



**“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day [he’s going to award me this crown of righteousness and entrance into his kingdom] - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”**

**Do you long for his appearing? Do you? Is that a part of your heart’s cry? That, “Lord, your kingdom come. Maybe today. Lord, your kingdom come.” Is that part of your prayer, repeatedly? Not just in the situations that you face. “Lord, bring more heaven to earth in this situation, in my relationships, in my job and your kingdom come, but Lord, would you just come back so it’s all made new?”**

**I sat by my mother’s bedside six years ago, knowing she was going to die sometime in the next hours. She was breathing and I was holding her hand, but she didn’t know. She had had brain clots and all sorts of things. I was all alone in that room and all I kept doing, while I was holding my mom’s hand, was praying this prayer over and over again: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We live in a day where we sit by the bedsides of our dying friends, but it will not always be like this. There is a day coming where God will make all things new. So let’s pray to that end.**

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”**

**Come back next week, yeah? Okay. Let me pray.**

**Father, I’m thankful for your grace. I’m thankful for this prayer. I’m thankful for the kinds of things that it reminds us. I pray, Lord, that you would help us to focus on the things that it focuses on. We love you and we thank you for it. In Jesus’ name, amen.**