

Friends, welcome today - my name is Spencer
 This is part 2 of a series we're on called As It Is In Heaven

We're spending 6 weeks looking at the Lord's Prayer
 Which is also our season of Lent - the six weeks leading up to Easter
 many of us will give things up or take things on to help us focus on Jesus
 As a church during these six weeks we're going to be talking about prayer
 And what it is that Jesus teaches us about how to pray

And hear that word: how... how to pray
 b/c here's something I believe deeply when it comes to prayer: you've got to learn how to pray
 Prayer is not one of those things that comes naturally - prayer is a learned behavior
 And there are a lot of who are frustrated

b/c we don't feel like our prayer life is where it should be
 So this series, we're going to be exploring some how-tos of prayer
 And learning from Jesus about how-to do this
 with the framework that he gave us in the LP

b/c you may not realize it - but that's really the point of the LP is to teach us *how* to pray

Each week in this series, we're going to be read the same passage

Matthew 6 - where Jesus gives us the LP

And each week we're going to be asking a simple question
 what does this teach us about how to pray?

Now, the LP in Matthew 6 is part of a bigger section on prayer

and we're going to read the whole section - starts in v5, the LP starts in v9

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Now the next verse starts the LP

but before we get there, we just learned 3 important things about how to pray

One, Jesus used the phrase: **“and when you pray...”** three times

Not if you pray...or when you get around to it...but when you pray

There is an assumption that if you are his follower - prayer is going to be part of your life
 You can't follow Jesus without also being a person who prays

Two, Jesus said that when you pray to

“...go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father...”

Prayer is personal and it's something between you and God

Sometimes we feel like we're bad at prayer because we don't pray like that other person
 You know who I'm talking about?

The person who everytime they pray, you're like - wow, that was really good
 And sometimes you listen to that person pray and you feel bad - b/c I don't pray like that
 You feel bad b/c you're comparing yourself to someone else
 But you know who's not comparing you to anyone else - God...
 God's not listening to your prayers, like...are they done yet? They are not good at this
 Of course not, God's not comparing you to anyone else - so why are you?

Three, Jesus said **...do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.**

If you feel like you're bad at prayer because after 30 seconds, you don't know what to say
 God's not listening to your prayers with a stopwatch - that's not how this works
 the point is not how long do you pray, but do you

Now, let's get more practical,⁹ **“This, then, is how you should pray:**

Those other people pray in long babbling prayers, or out in public but you should pray like this
 “ **‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’**

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Last week, Jason kicked off this series talking about how we pray to our Father

Who is hallowed, or holy...and yet at the same time close and personal

Today, we're going to move to the next part of the prayer - the next phrase

¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We're going to unpack this today - and ask the question

what does this teach us about how to pray?

To unpack this let's start by talking about context

b/c here's a pro tip on reading the Bible - always read in context

Always pay attention to what's around it - what comes before it, what comes after it

In context, the Lord's Prayer is in Matthew 6

which comes after MT5 and before MT 7 - I have great observational skills

I point out Matthew 5,6,7 are these three chapters form one block

called The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is the longest recorded teaching from Jesus - very important

And the whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is how to live in the kingdom of God

Now, In the ancient world, there was a style of writing

where you would put the most important thing you were trying to say

right in the middle of what you were writing

In modern writing, we usually put the most important thing at the end ... like we build up to it

But in ancient writing, you would often put it right in the middle

So that everything revolves around what's most important

Do you know what's right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount? The Lord's Prayer

And, do you know what's right in the middle of the Lord's Prayer?

This line: **on earth as it is in heaven**

This whole prayer revolves around this line

And really the whole Sermon on the Mount revolves around this line

b/c to be a follower of Jesus is to live within God's kingdom

Which is not like a place - it's more like God's rule

To be a follower of Jesus is to live your life under God's rule - or God's will

And this happens here

of course, when we pray your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

There are certain assumptions that were making - that are obvious assumptions

But I think it would be helpful if we named them - even though they're obvious

First, to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven

Is to recognize that God's will is not currently being done on earth as it is in heaven

You don't have to pray that prayer if it's happening

And of course, this is obvious we all know

you don't have to look very hard to see all kinds of things that are not God's will

Violence, and injustice, oppression, broken relationships, broken families

People putting themselves first and hurting others

We could make a long list of all the ways

that we see God's will not being done on earth as it is in heaven

And we would also have to put ourselves on that list - b/c we are fallen

And there are all kinds of ways that we individually that we choose to not live under God's rule

Here's another assumption

it's not okay that God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven

We're not okay with that - we're not just going to shrug our shoulders and be like, meh

I've heard it said before that prayer is standing in opposition to what the world calls normal

We pray for God's will to be done, b/c we're not okay that's not being done

And then the third assumption we need to name

Is that we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven

b/c we believe that God is actually able to do something about what's wrong

This is not just mere sentiment

you know how some people say oh, our thoughts and prayers are with you

No, no, no...we pray because we actually believe God is at work in the world,

that he cares about people

And that he is able to something that no one else can

So because of these assumptions → we pray

People who write and talk about prayer - have a term for this type of prayer
 That we see with this phrase - your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 When we pray that one of the things we're doing is praying on behalf of others
 So there's a term that a lot of people will use to describe this type of prayer
 And they'll call it: **intercessory prayer**
 When you pray on behalf of someone else

I'll be honest with, there are a couple of things about intercessory prayer
 that I've always found difficult
 One it's hard sometimes to know who and what to pray for - b/c there's so much
 Do you ever feel this way? you look at the world, and you're like: Where do I start?
 There is so much in our world that is outside of God's will → It's overwhelming
 I read the news in the morning and it's just story after story of the world not as it should be
 Or I get on Twitter and just doom scroll through all kinds of terrible stories
 How do you pray for the world without being overwhelmed by all of the brokenness?
 And I think the answer to that is simple: you grow into it - you grow into prayer

Prayer is like everything else - you have to grow into it, you have to build the fitness for it
 So instead of praying for everything that's wrong in the world
 and being overwhelmed by everything - it helps to really focus and be intentional
 Very practically, one way that I've found to be intentional in my prayer is to keep a list
 For years, I have kept a notecard in my Bible that is divided out by the days of the week
 And these are the people or situations that I'm going to be sure to pray for those days
 These days I keep that note on my phone
 one of the ways that you grow into praying is you be intentional about it
 When you hear of someone struggling - write it down...be intentional
 b/c I've found if I don't write it down - I might have all the best intentions
 And I'll say that I'll pray for them, but I won't...I'll forget
 But you grow into praying for others and the world by focusing and being intentional

Another thing I've found hard about intercessory prayer that I've struggled with
 is that sometimes it can be really hard to know what to say
 b/c sometimes I struggle with: what is God's will in this situation?
 There are a lot of times - I don't know what God's will is, it's not obvious
 And God also has a way of using all kinds of that don't appear to be his will for his purposes
 When I feel that way, and I don't what to say b/c I don't know what God's will is
 I take comfort from what Paul teaches in Romans 8
 In Romans 8, Paul has this long section about teaching suffering -
 Which if you know Paul's life suffering is something he knows a thing or two about
 multiple times he's arrested and beaten
 he often goes without money for food or shelter
 once he was shipwrecked, once he was beaten so bad he was left for dead
 and ultimately, he'll be executed b/c of his faith

There are all kinds of things in Paul's life where - you're thinking what is God's will here
b/c there is so much suffering ... and in Ro 8 he's reflecting on this and listen:

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

notice some of those words we just read, works like: frustration and groaning and waiting
This is the tone of struggle and suffering

The tone of things are out of line with God's perfect will

And for Paul, this is not a theoretical thing, about other people's suffering

This is personal - b/c this is what he is going through...But listen to what he says next:

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, - who's been there? You don't know what to pray for? - but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

When we don't know how to pray, what happens is the Spirit intercedes for us

He prays for us...according to the will of God - that's the promise of Scripture

I have no idea how this happens - I don't the mechanics of it

I don't know what these wordless groans are - maybe you do, I don't

But what I do know is that even when I don't know what to pray for - God knows

I can't tell you how many times I go through my prayer list on my phone

And I'm like, God I don't know what to pray for here - I don't know what your will is

And I just use the line from the LP

and I just simply say: your will be done on → b/c that's the best I got

Which by the way, is the exact prayer Jesus prays as he's confronted with suffering
And as he's facing the hardest thing in his whole life - he prays in the same way

Think about the night Jesus was arrested

He gathered his disciples together - they shared their passover meal together

Jesus talked about his death - he broke bread and talked about his body being broken

He took the wine - talked about his blood being poured out

Can you imagine how heavy that room was as he talked about those things?

And then do you remember what happened next? he went to a garden to pray

In the garden, Jesus pulls Peter and James and John aside

And listen to what he says to them,

MT 26:38“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

This is Jesus - the Savior of the world, God in the flesh - and catch what he says

My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death

even Jesus, who healed the sick and made the lame to walk and the blind to see

Even he had these moments of overwhelming sorrow and pain - so how does he handle it?

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.

And then he says: **Yet not as I will, but as you will.”**

40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

may your will be done → in the original greek this line - may your will be done -

is the exact same wording as the Lord’s Prayer

How does Jesus handle his hardest moment?

How does Jesus handle this moment that is filled with suffering and pain and all kinds of Qs?

He prays: may your will be done

Jesus puts his suffering, his pain, his questions...into the hands of God

He submits himself to God’s perfect will

In the midst of his hardest moment - he trusts in the goodness of God

I’m convinced this is one of the most important things to learn if you want to learn how to pray
b/c prayer is not about the words you use

And prayer is not really even about getting your prayers answered

Really, at the heart of prayer - is surrendering to the perfect will of God

Prayer is born out of surrender ... of placing our lives and placing others into the hand of God

There’s a whole lot about prayer that I don’t understand

But what I do know is that at the heart of the prayer

is the need to surrender to God’s perfect will

Today, I know some of you have things in your life that are heavy on your heart

Maybe it’s you, maybe it’s someone you love, maybe it’s in the world

What we do when we pray is we're going to put that person, that situation, into God's hands and trust him with the outcome

We can any situation - even when we don't know what God's will is

And even when we don't know what to say

we can take any and every situation and trust him that his kingdom will come,

that his will will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven