

When You Pray...Part 4

Matthew 6:9-13

The Purpose & Priority of Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

Note:

Many through the influence of the Medieval period (such as Dante's inferno) have come to believe that Earth is only a passing through moment (the song verse- 'this world is not my home'), and that the real focus is either Heaven or Hell. This is a huge misunderstanding of Scripture. Heaven and Earth were meant to be together the way the Creator created them to be (*Genesis 1:1*), but through the Fall, mankind's rebellion (*Genesis 3*), they split into two realities. Many think of the dichotomy, which is a division of contrast, between that of Heaven and Hell but rather in Scripture Heaven and Earth together are the focus, not Heaven and Hell. Heaven, like the table cloth illustration from last week, will one day come upon the Earth again as it was in the beginning and be rejoined into one eternal reality call New Creation with God. (See *Revelation 21*) So what is Hell? Hell will be the reality for those who want nothing to do with God their Creator within this New Creation. (see *Revelation 20*).

Robert Farrar Capon

"The new heavens and the new earth are not replacements for the old ones; they are transfigurations of them. The redeemed order is not the created order forsaken; it is the created order - all of it - raised and glorified."

N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*

"Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about."

"Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
Your name be honored as holy.

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 do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

[For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.]

This verse within the Model Prayer really is, in a sense, the focus of the entire New Testament. It is embodied in the work of Christ, and the mission of His followers to do the same.

Let's go back to a quote from last week...

N.T. Wright

God is not a man-made idol. He is the living God, who dwells in ‘**heaven**’, and longs to see his sovereign and saving rule come to birth on ‘**earth**’. This is, in fact, a prayer for the **kingdom of God** to become fully present: not for God’s people to be snatched away from earth to heaven, but *for the glory and beauty of heaven to be turned into earthly reality as well.*

I. The Purpose of Life

Notes: _____

Rick Warren

The greatest tragedy is not death, but life without purpose.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything *for God’s glory*.

Billy Graham

Being a Christian is more than just instantaneous conversion, it is a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ.

II. The Priority of our Life

Notes: _____

C.S. Lewis

“Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different than it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing into a heavenly creature or a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state of the other.”

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

III. The Privilege of our Life

Notes: _____

Nicky Gumbel

“It is only when we understand the transcendence of God that we see how amazing his immanence is, and what a huge privilege it is to be able to enjoy God's intimate friendship.”

Mark 1:16-17

As He was passing along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen.

“Follow Me,” Jesus told them, “and I will make you fish for people!”

Tim Keller

A church should not simply have a missions department. It should wholly exist to be a mission.

CONCLUSION

Dallas Willard

“Jesus never expected us simply to turn the other cheek, go the second mile, bless those who persecute us, give unto them that ask, and so forth. These responses, generally and rightly understood to be characteristic of Christlikeness, were put forth by him as illustrative of what might be expected of a new kind of person – one who intelligently and steadfastly seeks, above all else, to live within the rule of God and be possessed by the kind of righteousness that God himself has, as *Matthew 6:33* (‘seek first the Kingdom of God’) portrays. Instead, Jesus did invite people to follow him into that sort of life from which behavior such as loving one's enemies will seem like the only sensible and happy thing to do. For a person living that life, the hard thing to do would be to hate the enemy, to turn the supplicant away, or to curse the curser... True Christlikeness, true companionship with Christ, comes at the point where it is hard not to respond as he would.”

Emmanuel Katongole, Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith After Genocide in Rwanda

“The church's primary purpose is not to make America more Christian, but to make American Christians less American and Rwandan Christians less Rwandan. We are no longer Rwandans or Americans, neither Hutu nor Tutsi. If we are in Christ, we have become part of a new creation.”

These examples by Willard & Katongole is truly living out the verse of the Model Prayer, “Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done, on Earth as it is in Heaven”