



**YOUR  
KINGDOM  
COME**

PRAYER IN LIGHT OF THE END

## Your Kingdom Come: Prayer in light of the end

Jesus has come as God's king and he has brought God's kingdom. As he said to the sceptical Pharisees, with him present it was right there in their midst (Luke 17:21. See also Matthew 12:28). However, Jesus also anticipated that there would come a day when his kingdom would be come in an even more profound and glorious way (See Matthew 24 and 25, for example). This is such important news that it was integral to the announcement of the gospel from the earliest days (see Acts 10:42, 17:31, 1 Corinthians 11:26, for example). That announcement then shaped the way Christians viewed the present – always living in the 'now-but-not-yet' kingdom of God, looking forward to the great day of his return (e.g. Hebrews 10:23-25; 2 Peter 3:1-18).

This future perspective didn't just shape the way the apostles did evangelism or spurred one another on to love and good deeds; it profoundly shaped the way they prayed. But that's probably because this is how Jesus taught his disciples to shape their prayer too. Taken in isolation, we can easily think of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:3-4) as a simple prayer to learn by rote and repeat on occasion. Or we might approach it as a kind of formula to make sure that God really will hear and answer our prayers. What a terrible shame it would be if we treated it that way – especially given what Jesus says about prayer earlier in Matthew 6!

Instead, when we sit with Jesus and allow him to teach us to pray too, and when we put this into the wider context of Scripture, we see that God's people have always prayed with a deep longing for the 'not-yet' of God's kingdom to come. So let's see how God will re-shape, re-prioritise and re-energise our prayers, as we pray in light of the end.

*Some notes on this series of studies:*

- *This series of studies is designed to sit alongside our preaching program for term 4 2022, without following it in a rigid way.*
- *Each study spends time in Matthew 6 but also takes us further afield in the Bible to see how the same themes are consistent throughout scripture. Each study also has a 'Psalm for the week' as an encouragement to keep digging into the great prayer book of the Bible. Of course there are many other passages and psalms that could be used to explore the topic further, so don't feel limited by the suggestions below.*
- *At the back of this booklet are some suggestions for further reading. Many thanks to Wendy Lin for sharing her extensive recommendations for resources for prayer.*

# 1. Our Father In Heaven

## Getting Started:

It is likely that Jesus taught his disciples about prayer on a number of occasions. Just compare the content and context of Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4 for example. In the context of Matthew 5 and 6, Jesus had a lot to say about the kingdom of God, which he often referred to as the kingdom of heaven. Having made some radical claims in chapter 5 about his authority to interpret, apply and fulfill scripture, Jesus kept on 'rocking the boat' with the religious crowd when he took aim at the way they related to God. But for all the contentious things he said, one of the most surprising things would have been the encouragement that he gave his disciples to pray to God as their father...

## Read Matthew 6:5-10

1. From v5-6, what is the first contrast Jesus makes?
2. From v7-8, what is the second contrast Jesus makes?
3. How are these contrasts illustrated in the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray in v9-10?

Calling God "our Father" might seem like the most natural thing to do for some of us, but it's good for us to know that this would have felt quite presumptuous to the disciples, maybe even disrespectful. In fact, although the Old Testament often describes God as a father to his people, in all of the prayers of the Old Testament God is never addressed directly as Father. Furthermore, as Psalm 2 makes it clear, and Psalm 89 illustrates, it is the special privilege of the Messiah to call God his father. So for Jesus to teach his disciples to pray to God as "our Father" is a radical move!!

*Digging Deeper:*

*Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8 are the closest points in the Old Testament of God being addressed as Father, but even there it's describing his role rather than addressing him as Father directly. In contrast, Jeremiah 3:4-5 specifically criticises Jerusalem for presuming to call God Father.*

*It's also helpful to note that while God is described as Father to HIS people, he is not Father to ALL people. To put that another way, God is Father in redemption, rather than in creation. All people have dignity and worth as people created by God in his image, however the Bible teaches us that his people have a special relationship with God, such that they are described as his children and he is described as our Father.*

For more context, let's turn to Mark 14, where we see Jesus exercising this privilege of crying out to God as Father on the night that he was betrayed and handed over to be crucified.

### **Read Mark 14:32-36**

Mark records the specific Aramaic word "Abba" that Jesus used to address God. Mark wrote his gospel in Greek, but chose to retain this Aramaic word, which hints at how distinctive it was that Jesus addressed God in this way. It was the term a child would call their father, so it is a term of both respect and familiarity. Today we might equate it to an adult child calling out 'Dad', without implying that it is a childish term like 'Daddy'.

4. In this prayer, how does Jesus demonstrate his intimate relationship with God, as well his reverent respect for God?

It seems that Jesus calling God 'Abba, Father' had an enduring impact on his disciples. It was significant enough that the Apostle Paul included it in his letters to the Roman and Galatian churches – who spoke Greek not Aramaic.





10.1 John 3:1 says:

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

Who is someone in your life you could encourage with this wonderful truth?

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 103**

How does this psalm reflect:

- The character of God as Father?
- The privilege of calling him our Father?
- The security that is found in knowing him as our Father?

## 2.Hallowed Be Your Name

### Getting Started:

We're going to spend a fair bit of time in the Lord's Prayer over the next few weeks. It's a great prayer to learn by heart – not because it's the only way to pray, or because it's a magical set of words, but because it's a wonderful framework for prayer. Why not start memorising it now:

*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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and forever, Amen.*

### Read Matthew 6:9

1. 'Hallowed' is not a word we use very much today. What does it mean?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What does it mean to ask God to make sure his name is hallowed?

### Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

3. From v3-4, how would you describe the church in Thessalonica?



4. God is inherently glorious, so he is glorified when he is seen as he really is. In v5 we read that 'All this is evidence that God's judgment is right...' (v5). How does the growing faith of the Thessalonians glorify God?
  
5. Paul makes a contrast between the Thessalonians, who have received "grace and peace... from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v2), and others who "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (v8). How does this contrast help us make sense of Jesus being "glorified in his holy people" when he returns? (v10).
  
6. How does Paul connect the future return of Jesus to his present prayers for the Thessalonians?

## **Application**

7. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, the first thing he taught them to ask was that God's name would be hallowed – that God would be glorified. How does this challenge our priorities in the things we pray for? What would it look like for us to pray with a great passion for God to be honoured?

8. We can be tempted to ask God to glorify himself by doing all kinds of amazing things, yet it seems from 2 Thessalonians 1 that the amazing thing on view is the growing faith and obedience of his people. How might this shape the way we pray for God's name to be hallowed in our lives and through our church?
9. Jesus and Paul both prayed with the end in mind. What is one area of your life where we can pray together for God to 'bring to fruition your desire for goodness' that he might glorify himself both now and 'on the day he comes to be glorified in his people'?

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 50**

- Try putting v1-6 in your own words as a prayer of praise to God for his holiness.
- How do v7-13 remind us of the self-sufficiency of God? How does this prompt you to further praise him?
- How will you pray in light of the instructions of v14-15?
- How does the rebuke of v16-22 serve as a stern warning and perhaps a prompt to confession?
- As Christians we know that we stand blameless before God because of his grace to us in Christ. Allow v23 to shape your own prayer of thanksgiving to God.

## 3. Your Kingdom Come

### Getting Started:

Would you say your prayers are primarily about you, or primarily about God?

### Read Matthew 6:9-10

1. What do the first three requests of this prayer have in common?
2. In what sense does the phrase 'on earth as it is in heaven' apply to all three?
3. As a prayer, Jesus is teaching us that these are things that we need God to do for us, more than things that we do for him. How is this a rebuke and an encouragement to us?
4. How does this all point us forward to the return of Jesus?

### Read Matthew 5:3-10

5. How does this passage reflect life in God's kingdom as both a present reality and a future hope?

6. How does this present the reality of God's coming kingdom as a tremendously good thing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. This passage isn't describing a whole bunch of different people (as if some are meek and others are merciful), but different aspects of kingdom living for all God's people (we should all aspire to be meek and merciful and peacemakers etc). Given Jesus said this to his disciples just a few minutes before he taught them how to pray, how does it provide even more content to the prayer "your kingdom come, your will be done"?

### **Application**

8. How can we help each other share a deep longing for God's kingdom to come?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. How does praying "Your kingdom come" challenge you to be more 'visionary' in your prayers?

10. How does praying “Your will be done” challenge you to be more personal and practical in your prayers?

11. How does all of this overflow into passionate prayer for people to turn to Jesus in repentance and faith? Who is someone in your life that you can be praying for in this way?

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 27**

- How does this psalm describe King David’s deep joy in knowing God?
- As the Messiah, in what sense is Jesus the one person who can truly express this psalm?
- Therefore, how does this psalm give us words to express our own longing for Jesus to reign in our lives and in this world?

## 4. Give Us

### Getting Started:

What do you think it means to be content? Is it a sign of discontentment to ask God for things in prayer?

### Read Matthew 6:9-11

Jesus began by teaching his disciples to ask God to secure his own honour and reign. From this it'd be easy to think that God's concerns are all big-picture and spiritual. But Jesus then teaches us just how practical God's concern for us is. As the disciple's attention was directed to their own personal needs, Jesus begins with the very basic, physical, daily need for food.

1. What does this request teach us about:
  - a. our dependence on God?
  
  - b. God's concern for our physical wellbeing?
  
  - c. how frequently we should pray?
  
2. How does this kind of daily, 'earthly' prayer relate to the eternal 'heavenly' perspective of the first half of the Lord's prayer?

We live in a society which is totally captivated by present physical comfort. Which is not actually all that different from the world that the first Christians lived in. In that context, the Apostle Paul helped his ministry apprentice Timothy see that our present daily lives are inseparably linked to the day when Jesus will return and eternity will follow.

### **Read 1 Timothy 6:6-19**

3. How does the warning of v9-10 demonstrate that contentment is indeed 'great gain'?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In v9-10 and v11-12 Paul presents two contrasting goals in life. What are they, and how are they so very different?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How does the reality of Jesus' pending return shape the way Christians ought to think about material needs and wealth?

### **Application**

6. What does it teach you about your Father in heaven that he invites you to come to him daily to ask him for something as simple as the food you eat? What does this request suggest about the other kinds of things we ought to bring to God in prayer?

7. How does the simple request for God to 'give us today our daily bread' help us overcome a sense of self-sufficiency and avoid getting caught up in the temporary things of this life?

8. How would you convert 1 Timothy 6:17-19 into a prayer? Regardless of whether you consider yourself rich or not, why not aim to pray this each day in the coming week.

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 123**

- Allow this psalm to shape the way you look to God for his provision.
- Reflect on how our adoption as sons and daughters of God in Christ grants us an even greater confidence in his care and provision for you.



## 5. Forgive Us

### Getting Started:

Can you think of an area of life where thankfulness impacts our behaviour?

### Read Matthew 6:9-15

1. What does the basic request 'forgive us our debts' imply about our relationship with God? What does it mean for us to pray this daily, just as much as 'give us today our daily bread'?
  
2. What do you think Jesus means by the second half of verse 12, and by the extra comments in verse 14 and 15? How could this be misunderstood? How do these comments force us to think about how sincere we are in our request for forgiveness?

### Read Matthew 18:21-35

There is a lot about this parable that is hard for us to relate to. The idea of selling people to settle debts, or the suggestion that a master would hand his servant over to be tortured, is abhorrent to us. Jesus isn't condoning this practice; he's using the thought-world of the people he was speaking to so they could understand his point.

3. What did the actions of the unforgiving servant say about his appreciation of the grace that he had been shown by his master?

4. Could that servant have reasonably asked for further grace from the master, having conducted himself in this way towards a peer who owed him so much less?
  
5. How does this parable answer Peter's question?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How does this parable contribute to our understanding of Jesus' comments in Matthew 6:14-15?

## **Application**

7. Given what we read in Matthew 18, how would you put Matthew 6:9 in your own words?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Do you feel encouraged or challenged by what Jesus taught his disciples about praying for forgiveness? Why?

9. Jesus taught his disciples this prayer even before he'd gone to the cross. How does the perspective of standing at the foot of the cross impact the way you think about this prayer?

10. How does the perspective of standing before Jesus as judge on the last day increase your longing for his grace?

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 32**

- How does David describe living in unrepentance?
- What is his response to knowing the loving mercy of God?
- In verse 8 and 9 we hear God's reply to David. How does knowing God's grace transform us?
- In the context of this psalm, what defines 'the wicked' and 'the righteous'?
- As you meditate on this psalm, allow David's joy in God's grace to become yours too – especially as we know it even more fully in Christ.

## 6. Lead Us

### Getting Started:

What is an example of a prayer for guidance that you've heard, or one you've prayed yourself?

### Read Matthew 6:11-13

1. How are the basic daily needs of the Christian summed up in these three verses?
2. How do they reflect a humble assessment of ourselves and a humble dependence on God?
3. If v12 is looking back and v13 is looking forward, what does this teach us about how seriously we should take sin?
4. How do the first and second halves of verse 13 relate to each other? What does this imply about our vulnerability to temptation?

## **Read Hebrews 12:1-3**

5. How does this passage describe:

a. who Jesus is?

b. what he has done?

c. where he is now?

6. How does this passage describe sin? How does this relate to the prayer of Matthew 6:13?

7. This passage has a clear sense of a future goal that we run towards. What is it, and how does it relate to the wider focus of the Lord's prayer?

8. (If you wish, and have time, continue reading Hebrews 12:4-11 and consider what this teaches us about persevering under hardship, resisting temptation, and pursuing our eternal goal.)

*Digging Deeper: James 1:13-15 gives us great insight into the source of temptation and a flow chart of its consequence. The prayer of Matthew 6:13 does not imply that God tempts us, rather it is a request that he doesn't lead us into a situation where we will be tempted. Read also James 1:2-4, 12 for great encouragement in standing firm against temptation.*

## **Application**

9. How much do your prayers reflect a passionate desire to avoid temptation and sin? What might need to change?

10. Of all the things we tend to ask God for guidance in, and for all the circumstances in which we want his help, what would it look like to have this as our primary concern?

11. It takes a lot of humility and vulnerability to share with each other about the areas in life that we struggle with temptation. How might we build the kind of relationships in community where we can genuinely pray 'lead us not'?

## **Psalm for the week: Psalm 25**

- It's helpful to know that, while we can't see it in our English translations, Psalm 25 is an acrostic poem with each verse beginning with the next letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.
- Running right through it is the theme of God's guidance; to walk in ways; to avoid sin and grow in godliness; even in situations of great testing.
- In addition to meditating on this psalm, you might like to write your own A-to-Z prayer as an expansion on Matthew 6:13.

## 7. The Kingdom Is Yours

### Getting Started:

How have you gone memorising the Lord's Prayer? Can you say it together now? (refer to study 2 if you need some help!)

A simple comparison with Matthew 6:9-13 (or Luke 11:2-4) shows us that the final line was not part of what was recorded for us of Jesus' words. What's going on here? Well, those final words are called a 'doxology', which is really just a fancy way of saying 'a word of praise'. There is a pretty good argument that it was such standard practice for Jewish people to finish prayer with a doxology that it was just assumed that Jesus' disciples would add their own to this prayer. Analysis of the earliest manuscripts enable us to be very confident that neither Matthew nor Luke included it in their gospels (so what we're reading in our English Bible is accurate). While documents from the early church show that the doxology that we use today reflects very early traditions of the church's practice in prayer.

So how does this round out our understanding of prayer in light of the end? To consider that question let's turn to an Old Testament prayer that may have been a template for the doxology that the early church used. This is a prayer of King David at the height of his reign as he made preparation for his son Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem. This prayer of praise comes in response to the amazing generosity of God's people giving toward this project, which David attributes to God's power and grace.

### Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

1. What stands out to you about the way God is addressed in verse 10?
  - a. In what way does it affirm that God is much more than just 'a force out there'?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. In what way does it affirm that God is still 'out there', even beyond history itself?



2. What stands out to you about the rest of the prayer? What does David praise God for?
  
3. This prayer 'looks up' in awe and praise at God, but in the second half of verse 12 there is a sense in which David also 'looks forward' to the future. How does this phrase express David's humble dependence on God for the future?
  
4. That kind of dependence could feel quite hopeless if God didn't care about us. How does the relationship described in v10 mean that God's majesty and power give great reason for hope and celebration?

With that in mind, return to the Lord's Prayer (printed in study 2).

5. How does the final line of praise underline each of the previous requests?
  
6. How does it remind us to look back at what God has done, but also look forward to what God has promised to do?

This kind of underlying confidence in who God is can be seen all over the New Testament. And it profoundly shapes the way Christians pray.

**Read Philippians 1:9-11**

7. How does Paul ask God to guide the Philippians?

8. What does he pray for their godliness?

9. How does this prayer view the present in light of the end?

10. How is this prayer grounded in a confidence in God's power and his grace?  
(see also 1:3-8)

*Digging Deeper: Many of Paul's prayers reflect these same priorities. Consider the following prayers as two more encouragements to keep praying in light of the end: Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.*

## Application

11. How does the doxology at the end of the Lord's prayer remind you to pray big, but also to pray daily?

12. Aside from acknowledging God's greatness and goodness simply because he is worthy of our praise, how does the inclusion of praise in our prayers impact the way we think about bringing our requests to him? In light of this, what does it mean to pray to him as 'Our Father in heaven'?

13. God's kingdom and power and glory are real in the present but they will be seen and experienced in even more wonderful ways when Jesus returns. How does this impact the kind of things we pray for?

14. As we come to the end of this series of studies, how have you seen God shape your prayers in light of Jesus' return? In the week ahead, who can you encourage with the things God has been teaching you?

### **Psalm for the week: Psalm 24**

- Consider the various ways this psalm affirms the kingdom, power and glory of God and his Messiah Jesus.
- What hope is there for us to approach his holiness?
- This psalm uses the imagery of the gates of Jerusalem being opened wide for the arrival home of the victorious king. How does this invite us to long for that great day when Jesus returns and makes all things new?

## Resources

### Recommended Reading: Books about Living in the Last Days

***666 and All That, John Dickson and Greg Clarke*** (Blue Bottle Books, 2006). A very accessible discussion of what the Bible says (and doesn't say) about the future. Boldly engaging with areas that have confused and conflicted many Christians, one of the many benefits of this book is its dual authorship which means you're able to hear two different perspectives at a number of points.

***Teaching the Christian Hope, David Jackman*** (Christian Focus, 2008). This book sets out to teach with clarity what will happen in the 'End Times.' It traces six major themes connected with the Christian hope for the future and engages key scriptures that help unpack these themes.

***The Good Life in the Last Days, Mikey Lynch*** (Matthias, 2018). This is not a book about 'the end times'. Rather it is a book all about living life in light of the last Day, regardless of when it might come. A challenging, encouraging, easy to read discussion of how to live well with sacrificial zeal and joyful freedom in these last days.

### Recommended Reading: Books about Prayer

***Praying with Paul - A Call to Spiritual Reformation, D. A. Carson*** (Bakers Books, 2015). A bit dense theologically and takes some serious thinking, but the treasures abound. Carson is a skilled theologian who is gifted at explaining the bible; yet at the same time pastorally sensitive, astute and aware of the struggles many Christians face with prayer.

***Developing a Healthy Prayer Life, James W. Beeke and Joel R. Beeke*** (Reformation Heritage Books, 2010). 31 short chapters designed to be devotional to challenge and encourage you to prayer. The bible translation used is KJV, so takes more work for those who prefer modern word usage. Helpful, encouraging and short. [Note, only appears easily available as an eBook.]

***Prayer, Timothy Keller*** (Hodder & Stoughton, 2016). Theologically rich, pastorally astute and practically applicable, with a depth to his analysis as he interacts with other authors. A book every Christian should read and take to heart, as Keller outlines why we pray, what prayer is, the experience of prayer and practical suggestions for prayer.

***A Praying Life, Paul Miller*** (NavPress, 2009). In a chatty, friendly style, Miller shows how prayer has changed his life. He addresses many questions regarding unanswered prayer and our struggles with praying, sharing his life experience, including care of a disabled daughter. Leaves you wanting to pray.

***Little Prayer Book, 1522 and A Simple Way to Pray, 1535, The Annotated Luther Study Edition, ed. Mary Jane Haemig and Eric Lund***, (Fortress Press, 2017). Insightful access to Luther's writings on prayer and his extensive suggestions to pray both the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments.

Search articles and recommendations about prayer at [www.challies.com](http://www.challies.com)

## Recommended Reading: Books of Prayers and Ideas for Prayer

**5 Things to Pray for your Church, Rachel Jones** (The Good Book Company, 2016). Small, very accessible volume that focuses in on praying for your church and the people in it. Part of a series that also includes *5 things to pray for your world, ... for the people you love, & ...for your heart*. Bible based and specific, it will broaden your prayers and align them to God's will.

**Journey to the Cross, Wil Walker & Kendal Haug** (New Growth Press, 2017). A series of devotional readings & reflections for Lent. Includes some helpful observations & prayers about lament and suffering.

**A Method for Prayer, Matthew Henry** (Christian Heritage, 1994). Using the extensive bible sources prayers of Henry from the 1700s, Ligon Duncan has collated and adapted them for personal use. Start with the excellent website format which enables you to choose your preferred bible translation, and singular or plural forms of prayer. [[www.matthewhenry.org](http://www.matthewhenry.org)]. Note the highly recommended Appendix 2 on Principles for Public Prayer.

**Pray for the World by Operation World**. ed. Jason Mandryk (IVP, 2015)

Statistics, information and prayer points for every country, enabling you to pray in an informed, up to date way for all nations. Suitable for personal or family / group use.

**Praying the Scriptures for your Children, Jodie Berndt** (Zondervan, 2001). Encourages mothers to pray biblically, specifically and intelligently for their children. Divided into sections of faith, character, safety, relationship and future, each chapter contains numerous bible verses from which to pray for your children.

**The One Year Praying through the Bible for your Kids, Nancy Guthrie** (Tyndale, 2016). Incorporating a one-year bible reading plan, Guthrie takes one reading each day, gives some comment on it from the perspective of parenting and children and then provides a prayer for your child/ren or your parenting. Insightful and wide-ranging, with gospel-focussed prayer.

**The Valley of Vision (A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions)**. Contains about 200 prayers about God, Christ & his saving work, confessions, and specific situations. In old-fashioned language, full of thees and thous; you can rewrite them in modern language and expressions you find more natural to pray. Many are rich gold; a great resource.

**Old service books.** There are rich resources of prayer in various prayer books and service books, whether they be Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist or other. If you happen to own them, have a look and be encouraged by the vast range of prayers both to God in praise and confession, and for the range of people & situations in society.

See detailed reviews of many of these books and others at [www.musingsinadelade.blogspot.com](http://www.musingsinadelade.blogspot.com)

