Your Kingdom Come

Matthew 6:9-15

Key Verse: 6:9b,10 “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

 Today’s passage is about the Lord’s Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is one of the most frequently used Bible verses. Some start their meeting with the Lord’s Prayer. We read and sing the Lord’s Prayer when we finish worship service and Bible study. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us how to pray and what to pray for. It has the similar structure as the Ten Commandments: the first four verses for God and the last six verses for us. In the same way the Lord’s Prayer consists of seven petitions: the first three petitions are for God’s glory, and the last four, for our needs. Let’s study the Lord’s Prayer today so that we may sing the Lord’s Prayer more meaningfully and prayerfully.

First, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (9) Read verse 9. “***This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.***” Jesus teaches us to call ‘our Father’ first when we start. Our prayer is not an aimless shouting in the air, but our call to bring God’s presence. Our prayer has an object, God, who listens to our prayer and responds to it. The moment we call ‘Our Father’, the communication with God starts. However, calling God 'Father' was unthinkable at that time. The Jews did not dare to call God or write God’s name freely. When they wrote the word ‘God' “*Jehovah*” or “*Elohim*”, they stopped writing, washed their brush as an act of purification, and then continued to write. To them God is too holy to call and too far to reach. To them God was a very strict and angry king. But Jesus taught his disciples to call God ‘Father’. The word ‘Father’ is familiar and is very close to us. This is because we all have fathers. Most children have good memories with their fathers. But some have the opposite. Some fathers disappoint their families because of their weaknesses and sinfulness. Still, fathers care for their children, protect them, and provide for them when they are dependable. Even though our earthly fathers disappoint us, our heavenly Father does not. Our Father in heaven is perfect in love, care, and power. He does not make mistakes or disappoint us. It must be a great blessing for us to come to God and call him ‘our Father.’ When we call him ‘our Father’, we are all under his care.  Also, when we call him ‘Our Father’, we admit that we are all brothers and sisters who have the same father. Despite differences of race, culture, and language we are all the same family in Christ Jesus our Lord who shed his blood to make us one.

 The Lord’s prayer contains seven requests: three for God and the other four for us. The first request for God is ‘*hallowed be your name*’. Hallowed be your name means ‘May your name be glorified’ Our Father in heaven is holy and worthy to be glorified and worshiped. His name is above all names and all things of this world. What is the chief end of human life? It is to glorify God’s name and enjoy him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*.” God created the heavens and the earth. After creating each creature God said “It was good!” After creating men, God said, “It was very good!” (Ge 1:31) As the Creator, God wants to be recognized as God, exalted, and honored from his creatures. God is very pleased when his name is exalted and glorified. We are also very happy when God’s name is glorified through us. It is the same as our fathers are pleased when their children glorify their family name.

How can we glorify God’s name? There are many ways to glorify God’s name, but we glorify him when we believe in him and acknowledge him as God. Our strong faith brings God’s glory. God promises us with many words. When we believe his promise, we glorify God’s name. For example, Lazarus whom Jesus loved died and was buried in a tomb. Jesus told Martha and Mary that his brother Lazarus would rise. (Jn 11:25) Then Jesus asked Martha to take away the stone which blocked the tomb of Lazarus, but she said, “*by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”* Then Jesus said*, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?*” (Jn 11:39-40) Then Jesus raised the dead Lazarus. Like Martha our unbelief often displeases God and we gain nothing. But when we believe in God’s promise, our faith brings miracles and glorifies his name (He 11:6) Amen!

Second, Your kingdom come (10a) What does ‘God’s kingdom come’ mean? This means God’s dominion and his rule. The word *basileia* in Greek means both kingdom and kingship. We pray that God may come to us and rule us as our king. It is very important who rules us. If Kim Jung Un rules us, we become slaves of Kim. When God rules us, we are people of God who are governed by his love, righteousness, and justice. Today many people are ruled by Satan and live in the kingdom of Satan. Some become slaves of greed or other selfish desires. Others are under the power of darkness. Still others are out of control from their hatred and anger. But when God begins to rule them, they are free from the slavery and become people of God who enjoy real peace and freedom. This is the reason why we must pray for God’s kingdom to come into the hearts of people and rule them.

 In summer of 2002 I had a chance to visit Russia for the Bible conference. The scene of Russia from the plane window was beautiful like the movie Dr. Zhivago. However, the hearts of Russians were dark and sorrowful like Lara in the movie. God gave me compassion on Russians and began to pray for Russia by saying, “May your kingdom come on this dark and cold land of Russia”. After my trip from Russia, the seed of prayer for his kingdom was carried and planted in the land of Wash U in 2004. As soon as I moved to St. Louis from Chicago, I ran from my apartment to the campus and stood on the top hill and shouted in loud, “Your kingdom come.” I prayed for God’s kingdom for Wash U. Since then, 20 years have passed. Yesterday I visited the same place where I had shouted and prayed. The campus has changed, but my prayer topic remains the same. I still prayed for God’s kingdom for Wash U. For the last twenty years God has raised Ben West as a full-time minister, Dr. Isaiah Lim as a professor shepherd, Grace Choi as a shepherd doctor, and so on. Besides them through our missionaries God strengthened many students to study the Bible and spread them out as witnesses of Christ. I really give thanks to God for this. We still pray for God’s kingship in the hearts of Wash U students. We pray for God’s rule and his kingdom on the campus this semester. Last Saturday Dr. Joseph and Yangwon studied the Bible and prayed for God’s kingdom on Wash U. Women missionaries also visited the campus and prayed for new students. I visited the campus almost every day and sought new students. God sent Carlos and Adi last week. Jesus said, *“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working*.” (Jn 5:17) We will continue to work for God’s kingdom in Wash U and other campuses in St. Louis. How long? Until Jesus comes again. Amen!

Third, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (10b) The third petition for God is to fulfill God’s will on this earth. What is God’s will which should be done? There are many answers about God’s will in the Bible. Jesus said that God’s will is not to lose anyone whom the Father sent him. (Jn 6:39) Paul said that God’s will for us is not to conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. (Ro 12:2) According to the flow of the prayer, God’s will is to glorify his name by bringing his kingdom on this earth. William Barclay said that “Your kingdom come” and “Your will be done” are the same petition. God wants to see this earth be full of his glory. God wants us to see all people of all nations to praise him and worship him as it is in heaven. God wants us to see his kingdom come. This is the reason why Jesus gave world mission command to his disciples before he went to heaven. (Mt 28:19-20) “*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations*…”

 When we pray, we wish our will be done first, then God’s will. But the order is reversed. We must pray for God’s will first, then my will. My will often confront God’s will. At that time, the Holy Spirit continues to warn us and correct us through God’s word and our conscience. When we deny ourselves and obey God’s will, we glorify God’s name and his kingdom comes to us. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed for God’s will, not for his own will. Jesus prayed, “*Yet not as I will, but as you will.*” (Mt 26:39)

Fourth, give us today our daily bread (11) This is the first request for our needs among the four. When we pray for our daily bread, it reminds us of daily bread which God had provided for the Israelites in the desert for 40 years. At that time, there was nothing in the desert but thorns, snakes, and scorpions. God sent Manna from heaven and commanded them to collect only for a daily portion. Why not a weekly or monthly portion, but a daily portion? God wanted them to seek God every day. God wanted them to come to him every morning for their daily bread. Some may ask, “If God knows what we need before we ask, why do we have to seek him every day?” Of course, God knows what we need before we ask him. Still, God wants us to come to him, spend time with him, have a fellowship with him. He is like a father who wants to see his children more often and spend time with them. As we studied last week, wasting time with God is never wasted. Amen!

Fifth, forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (12, 14-15) To someone forgiving others may be more difficult than enduring hunger. This is the reason why Peter asked Jesus how many times he must forgive his brothers who sinned against him. What was Jesus’ answer? “Not seven times, but seventy- seven times.” (Mt 18:22) Jesus meant we must forgive others all the time. Then he began to tell the story of the unmerciful servant. Through this story Jesus makes a conclusion, “*This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*” (Mt 18:35) Look at verses 14-15. “***For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.***” Therefore, we have no other options, but forgive others unconditionally all the time. This is because the debt which we owed God is much bigger and more serious than the debt which others owe us. There are many people, even Christians hold grudges against others who mistreated them or offended them in the past. They never let them go until they die. Watch out that your sins may not be forgiven until you die unless you forgive others. We must repent and obey as Jesus teaches us today, “***And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors***. Amen!

Sixth, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (13)  We must pray to God to protect us from temptation and the evil one. Our daily life is a spiritual warfare against our enemy Satan. Satan constantly tempts us to fall into sin and to destroy our relationship with God. This is the reason why Jesus warned his disciples. “*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation*.” (Mt 26:41)

At the end of the Lord’s Prayer we recite “*For thine is the kingdom, and power, and glory, forever, Amen*!”, which is doxology. These are not written in the original copy of Matthew or Luke, but added around AD 5 and recited from 1970 in most churches around the world.  In conclusion, whenever we read or sing the Lord’s Prayer, let us glorify God’s name by bringing His kingdom to this world. Let us pray that Jesus may come into my heart today so that he may rule my thoughts and desires. Let us pray for our daily bread physically and spiritually so that we may become strong to resist temptation and sin. Above all, let us forgive anyone who sinned against us and pray for them and love them from our hearts. Amen!