Happy Fathers’ Day, Dads! We appreciate you!

This morning, we are going deeper in our series, The Gift of Prayer. Last week, we began with Jesus’ teaching the disciples to pray. In response to their prayer request, recorded in Luke, Jesus gave them a lesson in words that we call “The Lord’s Prayer.” Remember, this is our blueprint for prayer. And we pray based on relationship. Prayer is one of our most precious and greatest gifts from God. In Matthew 6, Jesus gives us detailed instructions for our prayer life. In verses 5-7, we are given some warning and admonishment, basically instruction on how *not* to pray. And in Matthew 6:8, we are again reminded of the beauty and comfort of this grace-filled relationship with our Holy Father: “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” In verse 6, we are instructed on the priority of prayer and the effort involved to commune with God, not just to present to Him a lest of our wants and needs: “Go into your inner room, close your door and pray.” This directive speaks to the intimacy that prayer provides but also the effort that prayer requires. There should be some preparation and planning involved, some intentionality. In other words, prayer is to become a priority in the life of God’s children. And while verse 8 gives us comfort that our Father knows our need before we ask, the verses leading to that revelation emphasize the priority of praying with the right posture.

In Mark 1:38, we are giving opportunity to see into the prayer life of Jesus. After a day of busy ministry, people lined up at the door of the house where Jesus was. He went to great lengths to get away and spend time with His Father. This look into Jesus’ prayer life confirms that our Father provides the privilege of access to Him. We must respond by making that privilege a priority. Family, listen! As we pray, we are changed; our hearts come more and more into alignment with His. Our prayer helps us remain faithful, deepening our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

With that in mind, let’s unpack more of the blueprint for prayer in the Matthew account. Verse 10 of chapter 6 reads, “10 your kingdom come, your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.” Listen, Church, our life of faith can’t be reduced to a list of “do’s and don’ts.” It is a life lived in response to the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. “Your Kingdom come” and “your will be done” speak to a place of complete surrender. They mean, as we say them, “Lord, lay your agenda over my heart.” Prayer is an invitation to enter the throne room to see the truth in practice. And in that place, we say, “God, I cannot rely on my own strength, my thoughts, feelings, or emotions. I’m not relying on my own wisdom or experience for guidance because none of these things are the foundation of truth. I come to have You help me live for the glory of Heaven, not for the comfort of Earth.” To this admission and submission, He responds with grace and goodness for our lives. We must be bold and loving in our respective walks with Him and bold and loved in our prayer lives with Him. Verse 10 says, “Father, read my heart and lay your agenda over it.”

When Jesus prayed, He was always seeking the Father’s heart and the Father’s purpose. And He always expressed willingness to perform the Father’s plan. We can’t pray “Thy Kingdom come” while promoting our own kingdom. Verse 10 is a key part of the prayer Christ puts before His disciples; it is a prayer of loyalty and devotion: “God, make my heart want what You want” (Psalm 37:3-4\*). It is a prayer for God’s triumph. It is an echo of Colossians 3:1-4\*\*. Look with me at Colossians 1:13-23 (see below, passages in support of this sermon). Remember we talked about the importance of our prayer pasture. That prayer is the language of faith. Family listen: When we pray, we pray from a place of rescue (v. 13) and a place of forgiveness (v. 14), giving Him first place in everything (v. 18). This is a prayer of priority. This world is not my home; it is not your home. Lord, for us, topple the kingdom of the enemy. Help us seek your Kingdom first, along with your righteousness from this position of rescue and transfer.

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\*Psalm 37:3-4

3 Trust in the Lord and do good;

 dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

4 Take delight in the Lord,

 and he will give you the desires of your heart.

\*\*Colossians 3:1-4

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Family, when we learn to pray this way, our prayer becomes a joyful experience! Prayer then feels less a duty to perform and becomes an experience of worship, like a call home! It brings light into the darkness. It provides an essence of Thy Kingdom to come. It helps us submit and allow You to direct us in not just accepting but welcoming thy will to be done. Pray done from an attitude of rescue and transfer sets a heavenly patter for earthly life; the desires of our hearts align with Heaven’s goals. The more time we spend with God in prayer and in His word, the more we understand His ways. And there is no substitute. Hebrews 11:6 tells us, “6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” To seek God and His Kingdom first is an act of faith, obedience, and surrender. Praying verse 10 helps give us a Heavenly perspective on sin, culture, relationships, and God’s power and authority. Prayer conveys perspective on His agenda as we pursue Holiness. Praying verse 10 grants us understanding and strength as we pursue His agenda, while helping us to lay aside ours.

Passages in Support of this Sermon

Matthew 6:5-15

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. 6 But 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. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“‘Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come,

 your will be done,

 on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,

 as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,[a]

 but deliver us from the evil one.[b]’

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

Colossians 1:13-23

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of the Son of God

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[a] your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.