

# Model for Praying - Part 3

by J. Glyn Owen

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*In this sermon, J. Glyn Owen explores the profound implications of praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' and the relationship between God as Father and King in our prayer lives.*

**Duration:** 46:28

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:19, Daniel 7:14, Matthew 3:2, Matthew 6:10, Matthew 12:24-28, Luke 11:2, Revelation 11:15

**Topics:** "Praying"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes his experience of staying in an old Hindu temple and witnessing people worshiping idols. He expresses his horror at seeing people worshiping non-existent deities, as he believes that worship should be reserved for God alone. The speaker then quotes a passage from the Bible that describes the worship of the Son of Man, emphasizing that God's dominion is everlasting and his kingdom will never be destroyed. He concludes by asking if there is a similar ache in the hearts of the listeners when they see God's name being scorned and his laws being trampled upon.

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## Transcript

Would you kindly turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel recorded by St. Matthew, to chapter 6, and we are going to look at the first part of verse 10. Those who regularly worship here with us will remember that a few Sundays ago we began a series on the Lord's Prayer, which we have referred to as a model for praying. And we come tonight to the first part of this very significant and very pregnant truth declared by our Lord in teaching His disciples.

He tells us, as He told His ancient followers, that when we pray we should be able to say, Thy kingdom come. Three very simple words, and all of us here tonight could enunciate them quite well in one language or another. We would find no difficult whatsoever.

And yet I want to suggest to you that this is a very difficult statement or request to be transformed into a prayer. It is one thing to read these words, it is another thing to mouth these words, but it is quite a different thing altogether to be able to pray, really to pray these words, Thy kingdom come. However, we pray that the Lord will help us tonight to get some understanding of this passage in order that we may be able the better to exercise our glorious privilege of prayer and intercession and enter into the large place of our inheritance in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we have already seen that the savingly ennobling experience of prayer fellowship with God is only possible to those who can legitimately call Him Father. I must mention this. We shall have to mention it again because it is basic to everything else.

Any man, any woman, any boy, any girl, anyone anywhere who really wants to pray must be able to speak to God and call Him consciously out of a sense of propriety and of the rightness of it and of the reality of it. Our Father. Albeit not a Father that I can handle with these hands or see with these eyes or even hear with these ears when He speaks, but Father nevertheless.

All men and all women are God's creatures by creation and by preservation. God is ruler over all men everywhere, over all races and over all the course of history. But not all His creatures are His children.

We become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. As John puts it very beautifully, albeit very succinctly in the first chapter of his gospel, to as many as received Him, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, to as many as received Him, to them gave He the right, or the word is authority. To them gave He the authority to become the sons of God.

Now this is absolutely essential right at the beginning of the prayer experience then. It is that I should be rightly related to God in this basic, very basic sense of being His child. Now this is why of course in the New Testament the teaching about adoption and regeneration, doctrines as we sometimes speak of them are so crucial.

Men must be brought into the family of God in order to enjoy the experiences of grace. God sends men and women into every part of the world in all ages during this period of grace in order to invite men to become His children that they may share in His grace. He wants to adopt people into His family and the adopted He would regenerate at all times so that they have an inner nature that corresponds to their objective status.

Adoption gives us the legal status of children. Regeneration gives us the heart and disposition of children. So that the Christian is not simply a person who has the right to call God Father, he is a person who has the spirit that cries as Paul says, Abba, Father.

Now before we go further this evening therefore will you permit me gently but very deliberately to ask, have we all come over this hurdle? Are you quite sure that you're a child of God? Have you received the Lord Jesus as your very own intimately personal Savior and Lord? Well if so be it known unto you from the Word of God and not just from the men in the pulpit here tonight, be it known unto you with all certainty you have the right to call God your Father and you may learn all that Jesus is teaching us here and learn it in your own experience. That's not the only step that we must pass and we must take. That is important but when our Lord taught His disciples to pray in answer to their request He said you must be able to say our Father who art in heaven hallowed be your name.

Now without my going back over the details of what we thought was the precise exposition of that let me put it to you like this. Ultimately unless I am a child of God I have no real concern for the good of His name. There are thousands upon thousands of God's creatures made by His hand and sustained from His hand.

Some of whom have been brought back to life again from a what seemed at one time to be a deathbed and He's raised them up again and given them a new lease of life. But they're no more concerned about

the glory of God's name than the creature of the field. But when once you become a child of God by adoption and regeneration, when once the Spirit of God makes you into a new creature and Jesus Christ is your own Savior now you become concerned about the glory of your Heavenly Father.

And this is one of the basic characteristics of a genuinely regenerate man or woman. You can be trusted with the name of your Father. And when you go out from a place like this and back into a workaday world there is something that concerns you.

Now you may not put it into these words, but it will be there underlying, overwhelming, overarching everything you say and everything you will do. Every plan that you consider, namely this, how does this reflect upon the good name of my Father? And if you become convinced that it does not reflect well upon the name of your Father, the name of your Father will mean so much to you, you'll say, no, I can't do that. Though sometimes you may compromise and sin, but if you do and if you really are a child of God, it will bring tears from your eyes and sorrow from your soul and repentance from your lips.

You see, learning to pray is not an easy way. First of all, I must become a child of God so that I can call God my Father. This is the basis of it.

Prayer is nothing other than the development of the relationship of father and child. In one sense we can overcomplicate prayer. Simply, without any complication, it is this.

It is the child learning to get on with his father. And the father in this case, of course, is the perfect father. But now we come to another step.

The next statement by our Lord is the one before us tonight. And the person who really learns to pray has to be able to say this, thy kingdom come. Important and formative as the believer's consciousness of being God's child is, it needs to be balanced by the realization that the Christian's father is also King.

Believer, your father is not only your father, he's your father and he is also King. Let me go further. He is the only King.

Insofar as there are other little kings so-called, he has put the crown on their brow and he has given them the territory to reign over. And one day he will take off the crown and he will break up the empire and he will scatter it to the four corners of the earth and he will say, your day is done, I reign on, you are gone. He's the only King.

And you see the psychological meaning of this apart from anything else. As a child of God, in order to pray, my image of him must never deteriorate into one of a spineless, very lovable, kindly, old grandfatherly sort of person who will always give me anything. Spoonfuls of trickle whenever I want them.

You don't have things like that in Canada. But you know what I mean, anything I ask for. But my father is King.

As well as father, he is ruler. He is master. And it's not the one or the other, it's the one and the other.

Now some people represent God as if he were nothing but a pale, insignificant, spineless father. Some people represent him as if he were but a tyrant king without a fatherly heart anywhere near to him. Neither is true.

Our God is father, the only father, the perfect father in whom is no flaw. And he's the sovereign Lord. And as sure as he can be trusted as father, he needs to be respected as king.

And if I am to learn to pray, if I am to get near to him, and if I am to get on with him, and if he's going to hear my prayers and answer them and honor me according to his promises, then I must be rightly related with him on both of these levels. I must never intrude into areas that don't belong to me. On the other hand, if he has made himself my father, I must always look upon him as one who is interested in every detail of my life and to whom I can come any hour of the day or of the night in the name of his son.

He's my father and he loves to see me make use of that. So there are two things here, you see. I must always remember that God is my father and recognize my kinship with him.

But I must also at all times remember the kingship of God, the sovereignty of God. Even though he is my father, he may sometimes refuse what I ask and chastise me for my wrong because he is King and he is Lord. Now let's come and look into the eye of this passage, this text before us tonight.

Oh, you've uttered these words many, many, many, many times and so have I. But listen to the ring of them coming from the lips as it were of the Savior tonight. He taught his disciples and he said, When you pray, say, Thy will be done. Thy kingdom come.

Thy kingdom come. There is first of all here a kind of silent censure. I don't know how else to speak of it.

Lurking deep in the heart of the worthy petitioner of this prayer, there lies a sorely felt disappointment. You can put it better, perhaps I can't. A disappointment that things are not as they ought to be.

There is a grief that arises because things are not as in the petitioner's mind they ought to be in relation to the kingly rule of God. God's kingdom and kingship are being challenged on all sides and whatever measures of temporary success may attend those responsible, the child of God, the subject of the kingdom and of the king, is concerned that anybody anywhere should be arrogant and foolish enough to challenge the right of his father king. And at the heart of this utterance in the Lord's Prayer, there is a silent censure of people in high places and low who do anything or say anything or show an attitude which reflects the kind of dishonoring of the kingship of God which is in mind here.

We sang those words tonight because I think they bring it out very beautifully. Lewis Hemsley's lovely and very simple hymn, but how precious. It's the prayer, Thy kingdom come, O God, Thy rule, O Christ, begin.

Break with thine iron rod the tyrannies of sin. Now here we come to it, you see. Here's the ache.

Here's the silent, the silent censure of the heart. Men scorn thy sacred name and wolves devour thy fold. By many deeds of shame we learn that love grows cold.

O'er heathen lands of far thick darkness broodeth yet. Arise, O morning star, arise and never set. Do you know anything of this in your heart? When people take the name of God in vain, when people trample his laws asunder, when people trample his creatures asunder and act unrighteously and unjustly and irreverently towards their fellow creatures.

Tell me, is there something in your soul that grieves because it reflects upon God and his kingdom? His rule is rejected. Is there a silent censure in your soul of things that are happening in our city, in educational circles, in other circles, in political circles? Now the kingdom of God loomed large in the teaching of our

Lord Jesus Christ and also in the teaching of his apostles too, though not quite as large, speaking in terms of percentages. One of the convictions which our Lord found to be diffused fairly universally among his people, the Jews, was this, that God was king.

You read it everywhere. I challenge you to go through the Old Testament and write down every reference to the kingship or the sovereignty of God. You know many people have tried it and they just can't, can't agree as to how many times the reference is found because it's diffused throughout the whole of the book.

Maybe not in so many words, but the concept is there. It's everywhere. This is understood in the Bible.

God is king. Now the people of the Jews believed that. It was a kind of ingrained confidence that they had by the time of Christ.

There were times, of course, when they didn't act according to that belief. Now we must notice that. There were times when they didn't live according to that faith, but when pressed, they came back to it and they recognized it again and they repented of their sins.

This has been characteristic of them all through the years. Times without number they would rebel against the truth they knew and then some of the prophets would come and declare the word of the Lord and they would repent and they would acknowledge that God is the Lord. And isn't this your history and mine too? Even so, every rule of God will take final shape or would take final shape according to the understanding of the Jews.

They looked forward to another day. It was then early in the future. They looked forward to two things.

One, to the restoration of the Davidic line of kingship as foretold by some of the prophets. The fulfillment of their dreams seemed to hinge upon this, that the kingship, the Davidic line would be renewed again, would be taken up again, whilst in turn that that would coincide with the coming of the Messiah, the promised Deliverer of God. And that's why we read tonight from Daniel chapter 7, because you see this was part of the image that really, really gave them their faith.

They always went back to this and to other such passages. Let me just read to you these words. In my vision at night I looked and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the ancient of days, which is a term for God. He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. The people of the Jews then could see this, though they sometimes forgot about it.

This was basically one of the principles that animated their faith whenever they came to themselves. That God was king and his kingdom ruled and his kingdom would outlive all other kingdoms. They couldn't say everything about it, but there it was somehow loosely in their minds.

Now, coming to the New Testament, when John the Baptist came on the scene, this was his first great declaration. The kingdom of God is right at hand. It's a beautiful declaration that.

I don't know whether it would shock you, but you see if I were to put it in John's language, it would mean something like this. The kingdom of God is sitting next to you, or standing next to you. Look around man,

he's there.

How can I see the kingdom? In the person of the king. And we need to get something of a shock of that, something of a marvel of that. The kingdom of God is right by your side.

He's come, it's come, in him whose right it is to reign, who embodies all the glory and all the power and all the wisdom and all the authority of the divine kingship in himself. Now, John the Baptist said that Jesus took up exactly the same strain. When John was put in prison and beheaded, Jesus went out and he began to preach and he preached exactly the same text as John the Baptist.

The kingdom of heaven is right among you. What did he mean? He meant nothing less than this. The rule of God is revealed to you.

In my life and in what I do and in what I say, I've come to disclose to you the mighty power and rule and reign of God. I'm very fascinated with one illustration of this. You remember how Jesus on one occasion was criticized.

He had cast out demons. And people said, oh yes, it's all very well for him to do this kind of thing, but he does it because he's in league with Beelzebul. I think that's the right translation.

The prince of demons. Now this is what his enemies said. Yes, we can't deny the fact he's casting out demons all right.

People who are demon-possessed are being are being healed. And we see them and we hear them. They're in the right minds.

They've been healed all right. They've been liberated all right. But he must be doing it because he's in league with a prince of devils.

And Jesus said this, if I drive out demons by the finger of God. Well, before he says that, I suppose I should start here by saying no, no. He says, I'm not casting out demons because I'm in league with a prince of darkness.

If that were true, he said, then the house would be divided against itself and that kind of thing would never do. But he says, and here I bring it up. If I drive out demons, notice the words by the finger of God.

You ever paused over that? Then he says, the kingdom of God is come among you. And then it goes on. When a strong man fully armed guards his own house, his possessions are safe.

But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and he divides the spoil. Now the implications of these words are clear. Jesus thinks of himself as the spoiler of Satan.

And when he healed demons and liberated men from demonic powers, he was doing it in the name of God. More than that, he says, I do it by the finger of God. You say, what a remarkable image that is.

What does it mean? Well, at least it means this, that God's finger is involved in the business. Now it may well be purely metaphorical, an image, just as we would use a metaphor. God's finger is in it.

But it's very significant, you see, that in Matthew's gospel, or is it Luke's? Never mind one of the two. The evangelist says, by the Holy Spirit. Instead of referring to the finger of God, the reference is to the Holy Spirit.

Why did Jesus use this picture? By the finger of God, I'll tell you. He wanted to show that whatever he was doing, he was now doing in fellowship with God. God was in it.

God may not be exerting the power of his right arm just yet, but he's exerting the power of his finger. The day of his right arm is in the future. The day of battle is yet to come.

The day when his enemies will be finally scattered is yet, and he will arise as a man of war, as we read in the scriptures. But his finger is enough to exorcise demons, and Satan's territory can be robbed of the master, even here and now, by the finger of God. So the kingdom of God, says Jesus, was a very present reality in him, but it was also future.

Jesus insisted that however present it was, there was always this future element to it. In a sense, of course, since it is the kingdom of God, it must come to a consummation. God never starts what he doesn't finish.

I often do, don't you? You know, it's part of our creatureliness. We take on things and we let them down. We turn back.

We change our minds, or we go out of puff. How many, many people, I don't say this nastily, but you know how many, many people in a congregation like this come at one stage and offer their services to do something, and six months have gone. They're very tired, too tired, can't go on.

This belongs to all of us. It's part of our creatureliness, and when Satan works upon that, we pack up and we change and we get weary, but not our God. He's the great I am.

He's the self-subsistent deity. He's eternally the same, and he doesn't change his mind, and when he's determining something, it's as good as if it were done. God never changes the ultimate goal.

Now this rule of God in men's hearts has sometimes been referred to as the kingdom of his grace, whilst his rule over creation more generally has been called the kingdom of his power. When his reign reaches its climax and it's appointed goal, then it'll become the kingdom of glory. That's how our father spoke.

So you have the kingdom of grace if Christ is in your heart today. You have the kingdom of power as he exercises his authority in the outside world and over circumstances and over providence. He's got everything in his hands.

He holds the whole wide world in his hands. That's the sovereignty, that's the kingship of power, the rule of power, the kingdom of power, but one day we shall see a kingdom of glory when what he has begun in our hearts and in history will become consummated and evident and the eternal phenomenon of the eternal future. Now the heart of the plea here is this.

Thy kingdom come. Where it hasn't been started, that it should be begun. Where it is already in existence, in principle, that it should continue and progress.

Where it is progressing, that the day will soon come when it shall be consummated and Jesus shall reign wherever sun does his successive journeys run. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moons shall

wax and rain no more. Do you know anything of that? Frankly, my dear Christian people, let me ask you, do you know anything of a yearning that Jesus should reign in every situation? If you don't, you can't pray.

I'm sorry to shock you, but you can't pray. You can talk prayers, you can sing prayers, you can read about prayers, but you can't pray. Because the man or the woman who prays according to the teaching of our Lord is somebody who has heard that Jesus' kingdom is not yet coming as it ought and is determined by prayer and by life that insofar as he or she has anything to do with it, come it will.

You see, this prayer is a matter of the heart, basically, not a matter of the lips. You know, that's why, may I explain, we don't say the Lord's Prayer too often. Oh, we do so from time to time.

Not that there's anything wrong or inferior with the Lord's Prayer. The inferiority is with us. And we mouth words all too easily, I do anyway, and I don't think we're any different, are we? We tend to mouth words when really we don't mean them.

I have been ministering in churches when the Lord's Prayer has been sung twice every Lord's Day, and I hear people sing very beautifully, Thy kingdom come, and I've heard them quarreling in committee meetings the next night. Each wants my will, my will, my will, and they'll tear the house of God on top of everybody. Everyone wants his own will.

You can't do it like that. If you want your little kingdom to come, my friend, you can't say, Thy kingdom come. I have to come to the end of my concern about my little kingdom, if I'm really going to pray, Thy kingdom come.

And I can only be concerned about my little kingdom, whatever it is, insofar as it facilitates the great kingdom of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That's why, you see, it's difficult to pray this prayer. I told you, didn't I? It's very difficult.

Oh, I can say it. I can say it in Welsh. I can say it in a few languages.

I'm very proud to say that. But that doesn't mean that I can pray it. No, let me come to a conclusion like this.

In order to be able to pray this utterance in the prayer, this petition in the prayer, there needs be, first of all, in my soul, a heart pleasure and a heart pain. Shall I take them in the reverse order? A pain because of everything that is happening in the world, which is contrary to the rule and the reign and the glory of my Father, my King. Pain.

To pleasure. It is my pleasure to give him the kingship, to make my very body his throne, and to ask him to rule in relation to my hands what I do. To ask him to be king in relation to my feet where I go.

To ask him to reign in relation to my mind what I think. To ask him to be sovereign in relation to my ears what I listen to. To ask him to rule in relation to my mouth what I say, yes, or sing or repeat.

And you can go through the whole of it. And if I don't find pleasure in conceding my whole life to him as his throne, my friend, I just cannot pray this. You know, there are some things in reading Christian literature that humble you more than others.

One of the things that always humbles me, and I suppose I may mention it more than once, I don't remember mentioning it here before, but there is one thing that humbles me more than most other things,

and here it is. It comes from the life of the 19th century missionary Henry Martin. Now, if you haven't read the biography of Henry Martin, I think you ought to.

It's very challenging, but it's tremendously soul-stirring. He was a senior wrangler at Cambridge. You must find what wrangler means, by the way.

It's not what it means in some parts of the world. And then he was a fellow of St. John's College when he turned his back upon what would seem to be, in process of becoming, a brilliant academic career, and he entered the ministry of the word of God. Then, two years later, on July the 16th, 1805, he sailed for India.

Arriving in Calcutta were a group of friends that met him, and he looked them straight in the face as a man who had come through a difficult voyage, and now had set foot on the place where he believed God had brought him. And he said, men, he said, let me burn out for God in India. Do you ever speak like that? What do you burn for? What are you burning for? What are you burning for? Men, what are you burning for? Ladies, what are you burning for? We are burning out, you know, every one of us.

But what are we burning for? Let me burn out for God in India, he said. All right. He was put to stay in an old, dilapidated Hindu temple, not the only place available.

And as he watched the people prostrating themselves before their images, he wrote, and I'm summarizing this not to keep you, he wrote that the spectacle incited more horror in his soul than he could ever put into words. Why? Because the worship of the human soul is the property of the Creator and the Redeemer only. And he could not look, he could not have any pleasure out of seeing men, however religious, however honest, however sincere, coming to worship deities that were nonentities.

When the only one, according to this understanding of the word of God and of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the only one who deserved worship was God revealed in Christ, and it tore his soul to shreds, he says. He later moved from there to another place, and this time there were many, many Muslims who used to gather around him to engage him in conversation, theological and philosophical, theological or biblical if he had his way, but sometimes they came in from another tack, and it became a sort of philosophical discussion. Now I ought to say this, Henry Martin was one of the most serene, bright, hopeful, joyous, glad men that you can possibly imagine from the picture I have of him, because he knew the peace of God and the hope of God.

But we're told that from this particular period in his life, there were times when he became one of the most miserable of men. On one occasion, the sentiment was expressed in his hearing, now you listen to this, and I quote, Prince Abbas Mirza killed so many Christians that Christ from the fourth heaven took hold of Muhammad's skirt in order to entreat him to desist. Now this is purely fictional of course, it's pure dramatic fantasy, quite fictional, there's no reality to this.

But what the Muslims said to him was this, that a certain person had killed so many Christians that Jesus Christ went to Muhammad to beg him to hold his forces back. Here was Christ then, according to this fantasy, kneeling before Muhammad. How would Martin react to that? Said he, I was cut to the soul by the blasphemy.

His friends saw his grave discomfiture and they asked what had caused him such offense. Martin replied, I could not endure existence if Jesus was not glorified. It would be hell to me if he were to be always thus dishonored.

His Muslim visitors were astonished and again they asked him, why? He replied, if anyone pluck out your eyes, there is no saying why you feel pain, it is just plain feeling. It is because I am one with Christ that I am thus dreadfully wounded when he is dishonored. Such a person, such a concern for the lordship and the glory of God as revealed in Jesus Christ is an inevitable and integral part of the spirit that goes to the making of this prayer.

My friend, do you know anything of that pain? There can be no petitioning, no praying of this petition without that pain, a concern that he is dishonored and his kingship and his rule frustrated. Do you know anything of the pleasure of conceding him his dues? Of making yourself a doormat if that is what he wants, that he should have glory. Of placing your life at his possession and your home at his possession and anything else at his disposal, if only he be glorified.

That is the pleasure and that is the pleasure and the pain that is necessary to make these words a prayer. Thy will be done, thy kingdom, thy kingdom come. Let us pray.

Our heavenly father, we meditate upon these sacred truths and cannot other than come under the shaft of conviction that emerges from them. We live in a superficial age, especially as far as the reading and understanding of your word is concerned. So that often times we read we know not what.

And the word we read has no power over us and no influence upon us. And at other times we simply memorize things parrot wise, but the power of your word over us is negligible. Forgive us, we pray, forgive us, forgive me.

But oh Lord, we ask that you will teach us to pray. And in order that we may so learn to pray this petition, may we, by your great grace, be taught how to delight in conceding to you what is your due and how to sorrow for a world which sins against you and dishonors you from sunset to sundown. Yes, and all day through and night through.

Our God, take us anew into your care this evening, writing your word deeply into our hearts and consciences and into our minds and make our lives transformed, that we may pray and live in a manner that is consistent with your kingship, who art also the father of all the redeemed. These things we ask through Jesus Christ, your son. Amen.

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