

# Seeking God's Kingdom

By Don Green

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**Bible Verse:** Matthew 6:10  
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**Truth Community Church**  
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45255

**Website:** [truthcommunitychurch.org](http://truthcommunitychurch.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm)

I invite you to turn to the gospel of Matthew chapter 6. We have been going through the Lord's Prayer line by line, precept by precept, and have pointed out different themes that underline different spiritual attitudes that underlie this manner of praying. Sometimes people will ask the question, why do we pray if God already knows everything? If God has orchestrated and planned in advance all that will take place, what then is the point of praying? And at one level, it's a very good, it's a good question. The thing to recognize is that it presupposes an entirely wrong view of prayer. If you use prayer as something that we use to change God and to bend him toward our preferences and our desires, as if we're praying, "Father, not your will but mine be done, and therefore use your power to my advantage," that's an entirely wrong way to think about praying. It's an entirely wrong way to think about God. If God is the Creator and he is Lord over our souls, then it would seem obvious that we would come and adopt a posture of humility and submission to him, rather than taking the posture of telling him what to do with his own creation. I realize that we're talking about the fundamental way that most people think about praying, but the fundamental way that most people think about praying is wrong and this prayer teaches us an entirely different disposition. In fact, the more I go through this prayer, and I've taught through it so many times, and I feel like I'm a pre-kindergarten disciple before these lofty words of our Lord, I've been thinking quite recently that you could actually develop an entire worldview simply from the terms of the Lord's Prayer, in terms of the existence of God, the rule of God, the nature of sin, the need for repentance, what purpose the world is coming to, all of these things and more you would find there. But also in it, and just by way of review, maybe for some of you that haven't been able to hear some of the messages recently, this prayer teaches us some of the most fundamental spiritual virtues that could ever flourish in the human heart. This prayer teaches us some of the fundamental attitudes that a disciple would take toward Christ and toward his God, and I've pointed these out, but I want to, just by way of quick review before we get into verse 10 in particular here today, I just want to point them out to you and remind you of what we've said.

The nature of this prayer teaches us to trust God when it says, "Our Father." Our Father, that is an address of trust, that we have a family relationship with God: those who are in Christ have been adopted into his family and therefore can approach him and can speak to him because a mediator in Christ has been provided to approach him. "Our Father," indicating trust.

You read on, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Suddenly, you're confronted with the fact that God is not simply near, God is transcendent in a unique way. His dwelling place is beyond the universe. It is beyond the celestial sky. He dwells in a place that we cannot access and his name is hallowed. It is sanctified. It is set apart. It is glorious. And so in light of that, we pray to him not only in trust, but we pray to him in reverence and with a holy, righteous, godly fear that we as sinful creatures are approaching a sinless and holy and matchless Creator when we pray to him. It's like two wings of an airplane that are both necessary for the plane to fly properly. On the one, on the left wing, there is this realm of trust that God commands us, bids us, promises us to come and he'll bless us, and yet on the right side, there is this recognition that he is high and holy so we would never take him for granted or pray to him in a presumptuous way. And both of those fundamental spiritual virtues in the presence of God are necessary to rightly walk with him, and they have nothing to do with getting God to do what we want him to do, to fix our lives, or to fix someone else's lives, or to get a thorn out of our flesh.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." As we've gone on, trust, reverence, we've said that there's a sense of anticipation in the Lord's Prayer. "Your kingdom come." That is a prayer that is looking forward to an indeterminate future, indeterminate in the sense that we don't know when it's going to take place but we realize that this world is not all that there is, that this life of ours is not all that there is, that there is something greater, something supernatural that will be introduced into the realm of human existence under the title, under the rubric of God's kingdom, and the true disciple of Jesus Christ, the true repentant one, realizes that that kingdom will be better than the present existence in which we live, that the rule of Christ and having Christ as God of this world is going to be infinitely preferable to the present condition where Satan is the God of this world, as it says at the end of 1 John 5.

And so the disciple comes, we come and we pray with a sense of looking forward, looking beyond this life. We, as it were, we lift our feet out of the muck and mire of the path that we walk in this sinful, cursed world, we shake it off of our boots and with a fresh vigor and a fresh lightness to our step, we pray, "Father, your kingdom come. Introduce that which you have promised. I pray, with a sense of anticipation in the future, not from a materialistic, naturalistic sense that this world is all that there is, not that my life today on this sod is all that there is. Father, I know from your word something else lies ahead, something better, something greater, something that will glorify your name. And so I pray for the hastening of that day. I pray with the spirit of the end of the Bible, come Lord Jesus." That's so much different than saying, "Lord, fix my life."

Trust, reverence, anticipation. We've talked about the principle of submission. Look at it there in verse 10. This is all by way of review. "Your will be done." Your will be done. Those four English words alone would be enough to repudiate and refute much of the approach to Christianity that is the majority opinion today. You know, "God help me, God do this. God I'll speak this, and you'll introduce it into existence." All of that is fundamentally wrong because the true disciple, the true Christian comes to God with a prevailing attitude that says, "I come to submit to you. I submit to your will. I submit to

the way that you're working in my life. I do away with complaining. I do away with grumbling. Father, this is the life you have given me. Your will be done." It does away with, it continues in the battle, you might say, as we resist sin, as we resist our flesh, as we resist Satan and temptation and all of these things that would pull us away from obedience to God, from glorifying God for the sake of our sinful hearts and says, "No, Father, I repent of all of that. I submit to your word. I submit to your law. I submit to you. I submit to Christ. Your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven." We align ourselves – watch this, beloved – this is so fundamental. If you got nothing else out of the six or eight messages that we're going to finish one day on the Lord's Prayer, this alone would be enough to permanently alter the trajectory of your spiritual life, to realize that as we come to pray, we are bending ourselves to God rather than trying to bend God to us. That difference is everything.

And so you come back to the question that I asked at the front. When you come to God like this, you just realize that you are here to respond to him, and you come back to that question, why do we pray if God knows everything, if God's going to work out his purpose? Well, we pray, you and I pray, because we are not fundamentally conditioned to yield to that, to yield the glory to him, to yield our will to his. We're coming to exercise our souls before him, not to get him to do our will, but that we would find ourselves in a humble posture before him, submitting ourselves, responding to him in his position as Creator and Lord of our lives. That's why we pray. It's to express trust, express reverence, express anticipation, express submission. Where else are you going to do that in a personal way if you're not doing it in prayer?

We went on and said that there's an attitude of dependence in prayer. Verse 11, "Give us this day our daily bread. Father, I'm dependent upon you to provide my next breath. I'm dependent upon you to provide my next bread. I'm dependent upon you for everything." And this, in the generally prosperous realm in which we live here on the east side of Cincinnati and the surrounding environs, this alone would be more than sufficient to engage our thoughts against our self-sufficiency, against our autonomy, and to just come and humbly say, "Lord, I receive life from you. I receive what I need from you. I'm here asking you out of your goodness to give to me what I need today in a fundamental recognition that my existence depends on your good pleasure. Father, help me to that end. I depend upon you."

And then finally, we spoke about the spirit of repentance in verses 12 and 13. Look at it there with me, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Father, I've sinned in the past." And Father, let me just expand on that just a moment and what I'm about to say is something that each one of us, I know, deeply needs. We tend to think, because there's an absence for many of us, if not most of us, that there is an absence of gross, flagrant sins that would embarrass us before men, you know, we haven't committed murder, most of us, you know, have perhaps avoided the sin of adultery over the course of recent life anyway. You know, we're not fundamentally, you know, fundamental liars or things of that nature and so we tend to think that we're not that bad forgetting that, we don't know the depths of the sin of our hearts. Forgetting that David himself in Psalm 19 said, "Equip me of hidden faults,

forgive me of my hidden sins," of recognizing that there are what seem to be from our distorted human perspective, forgetting that there are little sins of failing to honor God day by day, forgetting of the idle ways that we use our tongue, the vain, boastful things that we say and speak, the frivolous ways that we spend our time, the frivolous ways of topics of conversation, when we have opportunity to speak words of edification to others, instead, we're talking about the foolish things of this world. And those things are all sinful. We don't think about them as sinful but it is, as Scripture calls us to measure every word and knowing that every careless word will be given an account of, we don't even think that way, so we don't even recognize the multitude of ways that we sin against God in what otherwise would appear to be trivial ways.

Well, beloved, it's little sins, it's little sins that condition you for bigger sins. It's little sins that mar the image of God in us. It's little streaks on the mirror, little cracks in the glass that ruin the whole pane. And yet we don't pray that way. And so, one of the things that we do when we say, "Forgive us our debts," is we're just mindful, "Father, I know that I'm only conscious of maybe the surface of things at that. You see my heart for what it really is, and I forget sins as easily as I drink water. And so, Lord, I confess not only what I know, I pray that you would forgive me of the things that I forget, that I'm not aware of, that are contrary to your character. Forgive me for all of it, Lord." You know, in 1 John 1:9, it says, "If we confess our sins, he's faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins," forgive us the things that we confess, "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," that as we confess sins, God graciously forgives not only what we name before him, but all of the rest of it that we forget, how good, how gracious he is. A spirit of repentance cultivates that attitude and mindset in our hearts.

And then in verse 13, "Lead us not into temptation." Again, continuing that spirit of repentance, not only looking to the past, but looking forward and saying, "God, God, direct my steps into the path of obedience. Direct my steps into that which would glorify you. God, I don't, God, I'm tired of spiritual mediocrity. I'm tired of my prayerlessness. I'm tired of squandering my life and my time with vain pursuits and giving so little to the contemplation of the things of God. I'm tired of that, Lord. Would you lead me out of that? Would you lead me not into the temptation to go back there but to deliver me from it?" You know, and I'm just in a very inadequate way, just illustrating the spirit of this.

And so trust and reverence and anticipation and submission and dependence and repentance, that's the spirit that the Lord is teaching us here, not simply to repeat the words of this prayer without contemplation of what they mean, but he's teaching us an entire way to cultivate our hearts before God in ways that most of us don't ever even think about. And so, in light of that, I feel quite confident in saying that you and I, as we come to this text this morning, should do away with the thought that I've mastered the Lord's Prayer. Only if you've mastered trust and reverence and anticipation and submission and dependence and repentance, only if you've mastered those six virtues that arise from a contemplation of the Lord's Prayer should you say, I don't need this anymore. The fact that the words on the page are familiar does not mean that we've mastered the virtues in our heart and that's why it's important for us to consider these things in a careful, systematic way, without being in a hurry, without being impatient,

because this is at the very fundamental core of what it means to be a Christian and to respond to God.

And so, beloved, prayer, as we saw last time, or two times ago, prayer seeks the glory of God. Verse 9, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." And on the heels of seeking the glory of God, what Jesus now proceeds to teach us in verse 10 is this: we are to desire, we are to seek and ask for the work of God in prayer. The work of God in prayer. Not simply in an individualistic, selfish sense, coming back, stepping back, I should say, contemplating the fullness of the eternal purpose of God, what his purpose is for this globe upon which we walk, and to pray in accordance with that and to seek the furtherance of the purposes of God. That's what we see when we read in verse 10, "Father, your kingdom come." Your kingdom come.

I'm going to split this into two different considerations here this morning, but just by way of starting our consideration of it, just remember this: God is orchestrating human history to accomplish the plan that he established before the foundation of the world. Men may mean evil, God works it together for good. "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose." And so we come and we pray to a Father who has planned the outworking of everything that we see, who is actively at work in every detail that is taking place in all the world around us while he simultaneously directs the stars and planets and galaxies, all the billions of them, guides them on a perfectly predictable course, and upholds them by the power of his right hand. We remember that as we come and as we pray to this God and we remember that we are to seek the kingdom purposes of God when we pray. The kingdom purposes of God when we pray.

Now listen, each one of us either does now or will in the future feel the weight of earthly affliction, and we pour our hearts out before God on that, and it's good that we do but, beloved, and I want to say this just as gently as I possibly know how to say this, is that we have to think beyond our circle of life when we come to God in prayer, and to view prayer, to view existence, to view the universe, to view the future from his perspective and align ourselves with him, and to subordinate our particular needs for the greater concerns of the kingdom purposes of God. And so how do we do that? First of all, first consideration this morning from this simple text, "Your kingdom come," first of all, I encourage you to remember the return of Christ. Remember the return of Christ. And sometimes there's the Spirit of God opens a principle to you, and it's almost like a meteor crossing the night sky, and you just see a flash of brilliance that transcends everything against the black backdrop, and that light illuminates something in an electrifying way that goes beyond the way that we normally think. Beloved, this is one of those times. This is one of those times in the difficulties of our present lives, the uncertainty of what the future holds in our country, the continuing descent into chaos and darkness in the culture around us. Here what we're talking about is actually an enduring meteor against that dark sky to remind us not to be so focused on that that we lose sight of what reality is, reality being the way things really are, the way things really will be. That's what we're talking about. What will things really be long-term? And it's not going to be defined. You know, the difficulties in our personal lives are not the defining focus of the way things

will ultimately really be. Whoever becomes the next president is going to be forgotten soon enough. Do you know who was president 100 years ago, 1924? It was Warren Harding, but that's actually, no, it wasn't Warren Harding, it was Calvin Coolidge, because Harding died in 1923. See, even I don't know. These men come and go. These men rise and fall. They are not the defining nature of the way things are going to really be and what ultimate reality will prove itself to be. Ultimate reality is going to be defined by the return of Christ. Scripture teaches us that this world is temporary, and I'll allude to Scriptures in a moment to remind you of that. Scripture teaches us that our lives are temporary, that you're just a vapor that rises in the wind and in moments is blown away, that you and I, we're flowers that flourish in the morning and are wilted by nighttime. We lose that perspective because that happens over the course of years but all of it, all of it that our lives and our rulers and everything about this existence is passing and temporary, as I've said so many times. Here we have no lasting city, we are seeking a city to come. And the true Christian moves in that direction. The true Christian unclenches his fist around his life and the circumstances of this world in order to empty his hands to embrace by faith what is to come.

And what is it that is to come? Well, let's evaluate it in the terms of our Lord. We're here confessing Jesus as Lord, right? What Jesus says determines reality. What Jesus says is a reliable indication of the way things really are and the way things will really be. Turn to John 14 with me as we remember the return of Christ. When Christ intervenes into the world, all of this prior stuff in which we now live and occupy ourselves with, it's all going to be done away with and the sooner we grasp that and the sooner that we embrace that in our affections and let it govern even the way that we pray, we're all going to be so much better off, we're all going to be so much more like Christ, we're all going to be so much more at peace, because we've established our feet on the rock rather than the shifting sands of the circumstances around us.

What did Jesus say in chapter 14? You know, I just said, you know, our hearts would be more at peace. Well, here you go. Verse 14, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." Why should I not be troubled in light of everything that's going wrong and all of the difficulties and all of the, you know, all of the treason in relationships all around us, why would my heart not be troubled by that, someone might well say. Well, you know, if that question's asked in the right spirit, I welcome the question because there is an answer to it. Beloved, when Scripture alone is your authority, the 66 books of the Bible and no more. No traditions of Catholicism, no extra books of religion like you find in Mormonism and other false religions like that. No more false preoccupation with a false sense of apostolic succession that you've got to have ties to Peter in an unbroken chronological way in order to have authority. That's all such utter foolishness. If we just take Christ at his word, and in the word that he's given to us, we have an answer to these fundamental questions. Why would my heart not be troubled? Let me tell you why your heart would not be troubled, my Christian friend. Jesus said in verse 2, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you," here it is, beloved, you can mark this in your mind if you don't underline it in your Bible, "I will come again." Christ came once in his incarnation. He came once when he came in the

manger of Bethlehem. He lived his life, perfect obedience to the law, offered it as a sacrifice for sinners and shed his blood to wash away our sins, buried, raised again, ascended up into heaven. But before his feet started miraculously ascending into the clouds, Jesus made this promise, "I will come again. I will take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus says, "I'm going to come again." Right there, right in the simplicity of those words, for the newest believer, for the most confused Christian, right there is a spotlight that tells us what the future is ultimately going to be like. Somehow, some way, the Lord of glory is going to come back to this earth that he created, come back where he had been the first time, come back and do something different in this future coming that he has promised to us. And this is no isolated theme in Scripture, beloved. The return of Christ is central to biblical Christianity.

Look at what he says in verse 18 here in John 14. Verse 18. What a gracious Lord. How concerned he is for his wandering disciples. He says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." Verse 28, "You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." Jesus says, "I'm going away, yes, but I'm going to come again." Now what Christ did was in the interim time between his ascension, plus 40 days, and until he physically returns to earth a second time, he's come to us in the person of the Holy Spirit. He sent the Spirit to indwell his disciples and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, he is with us, indwelling us. And so he has come in that way, but he is also coming again. He's coming physically, he's coming visibly. Every eye will see him, Scripture says. Every eye will see him.

In Acts 1, verse 11, the angel told the disciples who were looking up, Jesus had just ascended and I think, understandably, gazing upon the magnificence of what they just said, the angel said, "What are you doing? Why are you looking up there?" Well, how could I not be looking up there? The angel said, "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." The angel told the disciples, "Yeah, he went up, he's going to come back down." He will leave there and come here. And when he does, there will be a whole lot of consequences for a whole lot of people and a whole lot of nations flowing from that. We're not going to get into all of that here today.

Beloved, Scripture repeatedly points us to the return of Christ. Let me point you to just a couple of passages, and I'm just going to read these instead of having you turn there just because they're smaller books and a little bit harder to find. In 1 Thessalonians 1, 1 Thessalonians 1, listen as I read from verses 9 and 10, "they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and," verse 10, "and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." Paul says, essential to the conversion, essential to the newborn faith of these believers at the church in Thessalonica, central to their faith, was not simply that they had repented and come to faith in Christ, they were now waiting for Christ to come back from heaven so that he would deliver them from the wrath to come. The return of Christ.

He goes on in that same book in chapter 4. Listen in verses 15 through 18 as I read. Actually, I'll start in verse 14. "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself," here it is, beloved, look at this. This is history prewritten. This is the outcome of our present existence told to us in advance. This will most certainly, most definitely take place at a time still future to us today. "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." The coming of the Lord having infinite consequences for believer and unbeliever alike. Scripture tells us this will happen. Scripture tells us to look forward to that event.

In 2 Peter 3, 2 Peter 3 in verse 10 we read this, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Beloved, when Scripture asks you, in some respects, the rhetorical question, what kind of person ought you to be, well, one of the aspects of the kind of person that you should be is to tie this knowledge of the future coming of Christ with the way that you pray and say, "Father, your kingdom come. I'm not so attached to this world, Father, that I neglect what the future holds, as Scripture tells me. Father, I identify myself with your purposes. I look for the coming of the Lord. I am waiting on that day. I long for that day. I pray for the coming of your kingdom. I pray that you would prepare me. I pray that you would hasten me and hasten the day of that coming." Beloved, in other words, we look for and we eagerly desire the coming of Christ. Our King will reign. Our King will reign on earth for a thousand years, and that is far better than anything that is happening right now. And it's not going to get better, no matter what our theonomic friends think that they can legislate this in, that they can impose laws on people and make things better. If law could make things better, the people of Israel had the perfect law from God and they would have responded to it. The problem isn't that we don't have enough laws or the right laws, the problem is the whole heart of man is wrong and distorted and perverted. That's the problem and you can't fix that by external regulation. No, it's going to take a supernatural intervention from Christ to change that condition and Scripture says that day is coming.

And so in light of that, beloved, because we're praying to our heavenly Father, because we trust him and we revere him, we prefer what he's going to do in the future far more

than anything here. Our heart and our home belongs to the future, not to right now. We recognize from Scripture that there will be disappointments, and there will be wars, and there'll be corruption and deception proliferating all around us. We realize that in the last days difficulties will come, difficult times will come. Well, beloved, in light of that, I ask you a personal question. I ask you a personal question here today. In light of all of that, why would you pin your hopes on what's going to happen during the course of your life here today, or during the course of your life on this earth? I say this reverently. I say this in the fear of God, and you listen to me right now. Why, in the name of God, would you pin your hopes on what the next election is going to bring? Why would you do that when you know that this world is going to go from bad to worse, no matter what happens, and when you know that Christ is going to intervene and bring in his kingdom? Scripture tells us, set your hope completely on the grace that is to be revealed to you. And so we don't pin our hopes on politics. We don't pin our hopes on a loved one coming to Christ. We don't pin our hopes on getting better physically. We pin everything, we put all of our hope and confidence and all of our aspirations on a grace that is to be revealed to us at the coming of Christ. That's what Christians do.

And so, I guess the question is, are you a Christian, and if so, what do you do with your heart? What are you pinning your hopes on? And how do you pray accordingly? Along with the spirit of, here we have no lasting city, we're seeking a city to come, we see this in Philippians at the end of chapter 3. "Our citizenship is in heaven and from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will," future tense, "he will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." Beloved, if you're a Christian, your heart should be set upon what we're talking about here, the return of Christ, a coming kingdom, not the things of this world, and that rising system of religion that talks about taking dominion over this world is setting up people for a lot of wasted time and a lot of heartache because it is not in keeping with what Scripture tells us to expect. So stay away from that if you value your soul.

All of these things is why Jesus teaches us to pray, "Father, your kingdom come." One writer from the 19th century, former professor at Princeton Seminary, when it was great, and it was great before 1929, this writer said God, he interpreted the prayer in this sense, applied it in this sense, "God, use your power to introduce your kingdom from above. God, use your power to introduce your kingdom from above." That's it. As we read Scripture, we see these promises of the coming of Christ, and I've only scratched a few of them here, we pray with anticipation in light of the promise of his coming. Beloved, it's with good reason that the Bible, the next to the last verse of the Bible, is that prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus." Those of you that read the Bible from beginning to end, Genesis to Revelation, over the course of time, that's a great thing to do. I encourage you to do it. I try to practice that myself. Read the Bible from cover to cover and understand, understand that what the whole Bible is teaching you to do is shown in its closing note that you would have a heart that says, "Lord, in light of these prior 66 books of the Bible, in light of 1,189 chapters of divine revelation, in light of the Old and the New Testaments, in light of all of that, my heart has learned to say, 'Come Lord Jesus.'" That's the pinnacle, that's the closing note of the Bible and with that, the curtain comes down.

With that, listen to me, with that, the curtain comes down on divine revelation. There is no more revelation to come. There is no continuing revelation, as Charismatics would say. There is no adding to the word of God by subsequent men. There's not. Scripture says, you know, don't add to this word.

And so, Scripture says, 'Come Lord Jesus, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, amen,' and the curtain comes down and revelation is closed and in these 66 books we have everything that we need for life and godliness. God has spoken with final authority. And the way that we respond to it is say, "Yes, come Lord Jesus." The point for today is simply that that defining hope has a defining impact on the way that we pray. Now finally and quickly, second consideration here. Maybe we can step back and look at it this way. Maybe. We'll see. In light of what we understand about the coming of Christ, we've looked forward and we see all of that, we've submitted our hearts to that, we, as it were, we put down the telescope. We set it down. I've got a clear view of the future with this spiritual telescope and now I lay it down and I look around me. I look at the world around me. I look at the people around me. I realize that there's another aspect to the kingdom of God as we read in Scripture and it motivates me to pray with a different aspect, with another aspect, better stated, when I pray, "Your kingdom come." We said, number one, you remember the return of Christ. Number two, you remember the rescue of souls. You remember the rescue of souls. You see, beloved, Scripture speaks about the kingdom in another way also. Scripture in the book of Colossians 1, verses 13 and 14 says this speaking to Christians, it says, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." We are in that kingdom now. There's a coming kingdom, yes, but Scripture uses the word kingdom to speak about the realm where God reigns over those who have repented and believed and we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness where Satan is king. God has intervened, graciously delivered us from the slavery of that kingdom and delivered us into the kingdom of his beloved Son.

So what, how does that affect the way that we pray, "Your kingdom come"? Well, it means that we are mindful of praying for souls. We look and we see, look at how miserably lost these people are. Look as people defile the image of God with drugs and drink and debauchery, defiling their bodies in ways that Scripture says shouldn't even be spoken of. Look at the darkness of all of that. And the Christian thinks about that and says, "What's going to happen to these people when Christ returns? When he comes to pour out his wrath on all of the rebellion of which I used to drink myself," you say to yourself? And so in light of this aspect of the kingdom, we pray, "Lord, there are still souls that are under the domain of Satan. God, I was there. They're there now. Father, I'm over here. I can't cross that chasm. I don't have power over their heart to change them. And so, Father, I'm asking you to send your kingdom power upon them to deliver them from Satan and to deliver them safe into the kingdom of Christ. One by one, hundreds by hundreds, Father, whether it's a single soul that we bring into the waters of baptism or whether it's a flood of an outpouring of the Spirit of God bending men to the will of God as it's expressed in the gospel of Christ, Father, I pray for the coming of that aspect of the kingdom. Not simply for their sake, though I long for the souls of those beloved ones who are so hard and cold against the gospel. Father, I do," you say, "but Father, I know

that as men are saved, greater glory is brought to you. When new people are brought to Christ, when new people are brought into the kingdom, the size of the heavenly choir is expanded. More voices are raised up in ascribing praise and glory to God and God, I desire that because I desire the hallowing of your name. And so, Lord, I long that you would save these souls and bring them into your kingdom."

Again, people say, "Well, why would you pray that way?" Misapplying decent theology, not understanding the full outworking of theology, people say, "Well, if God's chosen who's going to be saved, why do I pray for them?" Well, that's the same question as saying, "Well, if God's going to save whoever he's going to save, why do we even preach the gospel?" Romans 10. Yes, God has appointed who will be saved, and he has appointed the means by which they will be saved. They will be saved as the people of God preach the gospel, and as the people of God pray earnestly for the work of God in their hearts. The God who appointed the end appointed the means. He tells us, "Go and preach to all of the nations." He tells us to go and pray for them as well. Paul prayed for the fellow Jews and he said, "Beloved, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." How could any right-thinking Christian be aware of the consequences of rejecting Christ and turn a cold heart toward the lost, and pray about their little lives, their little problems, in utter disregard of the cascading waterfall of souls being rushed down into destruction. How could any true Christian look at that and not cry out to God that he would intervene and do something to stay the results?

So we see lost men and we pray to our Father, "Father, your kingdom come. Bring them into your kingdom also. Father, promote your glory through grace rather than judgment. Your judgment can wait, Father. There's a day of grace here. Show them grace. O God, show them grace. I know how hard and cold and stubborn and arrogant and boastful they are, Lord. I know that. I know that the trapdoor should open under their feet and plunge them into the abode of darkness. I know that, Lord. But God, you didn't do that to me. God, surely your mercy hasn't been exhausted yet, has it? O God, look on them. And before the coming of Christ seals the outcome, may your kingdom come on their hearts." Beloved, these kinds of considerations are why we pray. These things take us beyond the realm of self and self-centeredness and selfishness and preoccupy us with the coming glory of Christ, the return of Christ, and the needs of desperate souls all around us, all of that and more gathered up in that divinely concise prayer that Christ commanded us to pray, "Your kingdom come."

Let's pray together.

*Lord, we do look forward to the return of Christ. Your kingdom come. Lord, our hearts blaze and writhe in agony over the faces of those that we know and love that are outside your kingdom, just like we were one time, Father. We pray once again for them. For the sake of your name, for the sake of their souls, Father, their dear, precious, eternal souls, in mercy, Father, send your Spirit and bring your kingdom to them. Deliver them as you did us from the domain of darkness and usher them safely into the kingdom of your beloved Son. We do not have the power to do that ourselves. We do not have the power to change a dead heart and make it live again. But Father, you do. You've declared yourself*

*to be a merciful, saving God, unwilling that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. We appeal to the goodness inherent in your saving nature as we pray these things. And Father, I ask you, that a year from now, if Christ tarries, that we might stand together on the first Sunday in September of 2025 and look back on 12 months, which are the next 12 months from our perspective now, and to see that you had answered in abundance all of our prayers in this regard. Father, open the floodgates of your kingdom and bring souls in and help your people to learn to pray. In Jesus' name, amen.*

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