

# "Thy Kingdom Come"

Allan Pole on Saturday evening May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021



Theme: Pray for change in the world to start with us.

Text: Matthew 6:10

Here's a thought: We should bend our hearts before we bend our knees in prayer.

I have to admit there are times when I don't know how to pray. How do I pray for a follower of Jesus who has lived a full life and is ready to go to be with the Lord but the family has asked me to pray for his healing? How do I pray when I have been invited to serve with a ministry that I like but I feel like my calendar is already full?

My prayers can be focused on my own wants and desires but fail to take in the bigger picture. I really want my team to win, but does God really care about the outcome? Should I pray for a warm sunny day for our outdoor gathering while the farmer down the road prays for rain for his parched crops after many days of dry weather?

Jesus teaches us in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 6 *why* and *to whom* we should pray. He goes on to teach us *how* we should pray in Matthew 6:10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." KJV

Jesus calls us to:

**Surrender**



"Everybody Wants to Rule the World" is a song by English pop rock band Tears for Fears and was first released in 1985, climbing to the top of the charts in the

United Kingdom and United States. This song is about the quest for power, and how it can have unfortunate consequences. Although musically this is quite a jangly and catchy song, its lyrical theme is actually pretty dark. "The concept is quite serious - it's about everybody wanting power, about warfare and the misery it causes," Curt Smith of Tears for Fears explained on the band's website (<https://www.songfacts.com/facts/tears-for-fears/everybody-wants-to-rule-the-world>).

There is an ongoing struggle for power around the world, but this struggle rages inside men, women, boys and girls everywhere. From the moment we are born we think people should serve us. Then from the toddler through teenage years the battle for self-government with parents and siblings continues in ways that are sometimes more obvious than others. The unholy trinity of me, myself and I ascend the throne and resists any threats to power.

Do you know why the pancake king lost his kingdom? Because he was usyruped.

We should bend our hearts before we bend our knees in prayer. The Lord has to break us and shape us so we are useful in His hands. Without submissive hearts, we are like wild horses galloping in the pasture with little practical use to our master. Until we allow Him to "get on and ride us", He *cannot* or *will* not steer us in the direction He wants us to go and use us in the work He wants us to do. This battle for supremacy is waged first of all in our prayer rooms. This is why Jesus teaches us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Praying this way starts with acknowledging there is a king, and we are not Him. This king is not just *a* king; He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). This king is not in exile. This king has a territory. Bible students and scholars have debated for years where this territory is. The discussion continues on how much of this kingdom is now and how much of His kingdom is not yet. I don't fit in either of these camps because I believe it's both. Our Father's kingdom is now and it is not yet. He wants to reign in us now and there is coming a day when His kingship over all of creation will be unquestioned. He rules now in the unseen, spiritual, heavenly realm but there is coming a day when He will also rule in the physical realm where every eye can see.

Ultimately there are just two kinds of people in the world: those who say, "Thy will be done," and those who say, "My will be done." When Jesus teaches us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," He is teaching us to pray that the King will take His rightful place of rulership in us and in the world around us. It would be hypocritical to ask our Father to rule in the world around us if we did not first surrender to Him. Our Heavenly Father wants to change the world – beginning with us.

The Jewish religious leaders looked for the Messiah to come and lead the nation in victory over the despised Romans. They saw the kingdom through physical, political and military eyes. Jesus, however, corrects their thinking in Luke 17:20-21:

20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." NIV

Jesus goes on to say that the full manifestation or revelation of the kingdom of God is still to come. Until then, the kingdom of God is within you. We know the kingdom of God has come to us when His will is being accomplished in us and through us. This takes our faith to a much deeper level than simply believing that God exists. Simply believing that God exists is something that even the demons believe – and shudder (James 2:19). When we submit to our Father, we are in a place to pray His will.

This idea is behind what the Apostle John writes in 1 John 5:14-15:

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. NIV

Divinely steered praying starts with a will alignment. Submission to the Father was the key to Jesus' fruitfulness and fulfillment 2,000 years ago and it is the key to our fruitfulness and fulfillment today. When we know and surrender to our Father's will, we can pray for His will to be accomplished in the world around us. We won't need to guess at what He wants to do and say, we can pray with faith and confidence because we know His heart and intent.

This will probably rub you the wrong way the first time you hear it, but the greatest form of government is not a democracy but a benevolent dictatorship. Think about it: a democracy is only as godly, wise and selfless as those who vote. A kingdom prospers when the king has the best interests of his subjects at heart. Our heavenly Father loves us and wants the very best for us.

Rick Warren counsels:

You know you're surrendered to God when you rely on God to work things out instead of trying to manipulate others, force your agenda, and control the situation. You let go and let God work. You don't have to always be "in charge." Instead of trying harder, you trust more.

Can we trust Him completely? Will we obey Him fully?

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## Intercede



We tend to think that prayer is not productive or important, but take another look at the Book of Acts and how much God did when His people prayed.

The church spread so quickly and widely in the midst of hardship and persecution that in the year 313 A.D., the Roman emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, making it legal to be a Christian for the first time in history. Less than 70 years later, in 380 A.D., Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire thanks to the Edict of Thessalonica, courtesy of the emperor Theodosius I (from <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/the-pros-and-cons-of-cultural-christianity>). There were definite pros and cons to these developments. Some thought, "Wonderful, the kingdom of God is being established here on earth!" However, many would argue this was a turning point when followers of Jesus drifted from His declaration, "The kingdom of God is within you." Having the strength of the Roman Empire behind them, the church began to flex its muscles rather than extend its hand to serve. Many people became cultural Christians rather than true followers of Jesus.

Jesus teaches us to pray with transformed hearts for the transformation of hearts around us. Having experienced the wonderful benefits of submitting to our Heavenly Father, we want the same for all creatures, communities, countries and continents. We begin to pray that others will join us in surrendering to the One who can be trusted completely.

Daniel stood tall in a dark time in Israel's history while they and Judah had gone into captivity more than 500 years Before Christ because he humbled himself and knelt low before the King of kings in prayer. He served as an advisor to several kings while remaining faithful to the Lord. The wisdom Daniel displayed in public flowed out of a consistent life of prayer and intercession in private.

Daniel 9:1-6 provides a sample of how he prayed for his people:

1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes, who was made ruler over the

Babylonian kingdom - 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. 3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, 5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. NIV

Did you notice how Daniel prays in the first person rather than the third person? He does *not* confess to the Lord in verses 5 and 6, "*They* have sinned and done wrong. *They* have been wicked and have rebelled; *they* have turned away from your commands and laws. *They* have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. Instead, Daniel confesses, "*We* have sinned and done wrong. *We* have been wicked and have rebelled; *we* have turned away from your commands and laws. *We* have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

The heart of an intercessor identifies with those for whom he or she intercedes. Standing in the gap between God and people calls for humility and compassion. Pride and self-righteousness will short-circuit the flow of intercession. Selfishness and hard-heartedness are large bricks in the wall that separates us from others. When we recognize our own sin and unworthiness before the throne of God, we can pray in ways that touch the heart of God. I would encourage us to consider our own shortcomings when we ask the Lord to forgive the sins of those around us. Praying for "us" rather than "them" is one way we can express this heart of intercession.

Would you pray that the kingdom of heaven would come, that our Father's will be done here on earth as it is in heaven? Would you give yourself to praying that others would surrender to our Father with us?

In 1857, there was a 46-year-old man named Jeremiah Lamphere who lived in New York City. Jeremiah loved the Lord tremendously, but he didn't feel that he could do much for the Lord until he began to feel a burden for the lost and accepted an invitation from his church to be an inner-city missionary. So, in July of 1857, he started walking up and down the streets of New York passing out tracts and talking to people about Jesus, but he wasn't having any success. Then God put it on his heart to try prayer. So, he printed up a bunch of tracts, and he passed them out to anyone, and everyone he met. He invited anyone who wanted to come to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Old North Dutch Reform

Church on Fulton Street in New York City from 12 to 1 on Wednesday to pray. He passed out hundreds and hundreds of fliers and put up posters everywhere he could. Wednesday came and at noon nobody showed up.

Jeremiah got on his knees and started praying. For 30 minutes, he prayed by himself when finally, five other people walked in. The next week 20 people came. The next week between 30 and 40 people came. They then decided to meet every day from 12:00 to 1:00 to pray for the city. Before long a few ministers started coming and they said, "We need to start this at our churches." Within six months, there were over 5,000 prayer groups meeting every day in New York. Soon the word spread all over America. Prayer meetings began in Philadelphia, Detroit and Washington D.C. In fact, President Franklin Pierce started going almost every day to a noonday prayer meeting. By 1859 [two years later], some 15,000 cities in America had downtown prayer meetings every day at noon, and thousands came to Christ. The great thing about this revival is that there is not a famous preacher associated with it. It was all started by one man wanting to pray (from <https://www.jtdyer.com/prayer-changes-nation>).

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**Intercede**

Pray for change in the world to start with us.

