



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



HG57: The Lord's Prayer (4/8) *Purpose: The Meaning Of Life*

Matthew 6:5-13

Home Group Study Notes

16th October 2011 - Revd Tom Loh



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.



Welcome/Ice Breaker (10 mins)

If you could make your own paradise, what would it be like?



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...





Looking Upwards (40 mins) *Bible Study*

Read through the text for this study, and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, of your answers with your Home Group.

1: How does one go from being a citizen of the kingdom of darkness, to being a citizen of God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14)?

2: If your political party uses a manifesto in which it suggests that it will bring in a new and perfect era of justice and righteousness in this country, do you say 'Amen' or accuse them of trying to do what only God can do?

3: What are your expectations, and how do you feel about the future coming of the Kingdom of God?

"Your Kingdom come, **your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven". God's will is that the entire human race looks to Jesus for their salvation before the coming day of judgement. Heaven is already like this. It is full of millions of angels and millions of Christians who have died all looking to the Lamb who sits on the throne. God's will is that it be like that on earth, as it is in heaven. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, is my will the same as God's will?

When we seek God's will for our lives, what kind of answer are we looking for? Are we expecting the answer to include making Jesus known in a hostile and troubled world? Or did we have something more inline with our own plans and interests? Jesus himself shows us in his own life what it truly means to pray this prayer. When Jesus was praying to his heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane he had two options before him.

On the one hand he faced certain death at the hands of his enemies. Not only that, but he must be forsaken by his own eternal and loving Father in order to die for a world that has caused him nothing but trouble and pain. On the other hand, he could choose to save himself and look after his own interests. He could have slipped away and avoided capture, or better still he could have commanded a legion of angels to destroy his enemies with a single blow. To avoid the cross could have been easy for Jesus. He need only call upon his Father, and the Father would come rushing to his rescue. But what does Jesus pray? "yet not my will, but yours be done."

The will of the Father is to empty ourselves of self-love and lay down our lives for our friends, just as Jesus did for us. In doing this we reveal to the world the love of Jesus and the love of God. When we suffer so that others can be saved we reveal to the world the heart of the living God, and so draw people to Jesus.

Summary: If we are followers of Jesus, then we have a glorious future to look forward to. We are eagerly awaiting his return so we can begin our new life together here on earth. A life that is uninterrupted by this present age of death and sin. When Jesus returns he will bring heaven with him, and we will live on a renewed earth with God dwelling amongst his people.

Yet, if we are followers of Jesus, then in this present age of darkness, we must lay down our own wills, pick up our crosses and follow Jesus. We must prepare to be hated and badly treated by our neighbours, governments, and even our closest friends and family. We must be prepared to give up our comfort in this age, in order to win people for the next. This might include how we spend our money, how we spend our spare time, what we get involved with, and most certainly what we pray about.

Today, and every day, let us be bold enough to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen.*

The prayer is for God's kingdom to come here where we are, on earth. This is exactly what we find in Revelation 21:1-5. The New Creation is a wonderful future. If you love life now, with all the joy of created life – walking in the countryside, eating good food, sharing a drink with friends, reading a good book, playing sport, gardening, playing musical instruments, or whatever – then you were made for the New Creation!

However, best of all about the New Creation is that we will enjoy a face-to-face relationship with God and Jesus, as we are filled with His Spirit. Imagine how wonderful it must have been for the disciples to hangout with Jesus every day. Well, we too will enjoy that kind of fellowship not only with Jesus, but also God the Father when He comes to dwell with His people in the New Jerusalem.

There is much more to say about the New Creation, each time we think about it our hearts should burn with eagerness to be a part of that future. It is worth thinking about it every day and studying the scriptures to find out more. This way, we will keep our eyes fixed on our destination as we continue to live in this present age of darkness. As Peter says: *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.* (2 Peter 3:13-14).

Peter reminds us that the future hope we have affects the way we live today. If we are looking forward to a renewed earth where righteousness exists without wickedness, then it only makes sense to start enjoying that kind of existence now. The end of the world is not an excuse to indulge in sinfulness while we still can. Therefore, the Lord's prayer is a prayer that Jesus would come soon, but it is also a prayer concerning how we should live today.

As a Christian community the church is to begin living our future kingdom life now in this present age. The local church should be a small window for outsiders to witness a glimpse of the kingdom of God amidst the present darkness. Our church families should be a place of salvation, freedom, love, unity and joy, a place free from the trappings of this life. We should be a community that does not hope in the temporary promises of this age, whether it is personal health and wealth, or whether it is political philosophies such as capitalism or communism.

This does not mean that Christians isolate themselves from the world. Far from it. We engage with the world in such a way that we demonstrate our hope is in Jesus and his kingdom alone. For example, Abraham, when he entered the Promised Land could have easily begun building a city for himself, a permanent dwelling for himself and his progeny. However he and his family chose to live in tents, (Hebrews 11:13b-16).

What is the Father's Will? So what is the will of the Father whilst we live in this passing age? No one understands that better or puts it better than Jesus when He says: *"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:38-40)

What is the Father's will? That no one should miss out on the kingdom of God. That everyone should turn to Christ, and enter into eternal life on the last day. This is the will of God. This is what he is all about, and this is what he wants. Can there be any stronger statement than that? God wants to save everyone, he is not willing that one person dies without having the opportunity to respond to the invitation of Jesus. This is his will morning, day and night.

4: Jesus is a physical human being, how does this impact our understanding of the future Kingdom of God?

5: We often want to know what God's will is for our lives. How does John 6:38-40 help guide our understanding of God's will for us on a day-to-day basis, and for the big decisions in life?

6: What are you looking forward to most about the New Creation?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



HG57: The Lord's Prayer (4/8) *Purpose: The Meaning Of Life*

Matthew 6:5-13

Home Group Sermon Notes

16th October 2011 - Revd Tom Loh

Introduction: As Christians, and especially as Anglican's, we are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer. We recite it most Sunday's and some of us say it daily. Jesus himself expects us to use this prayer daily. But how often do we stop to consider what we are actually praying? We're so used to saying it, we often forget what we're actually praying for. When we pray "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" what do you think we are praying for? Is it about making sure my life goes according to plan? Is it a sort of general good will prayer, "peace on earth and good will to all men", the sort we might say at Christmas? Is it about God's sovereignty over governments and world events? Perhaps we should begin by asking ourselves the question:

What is God's Kingdom? Essentially, God's kingdom is anywhere where Jesus reigns as king. So when Jesus went around saying that the kingdom of God was near, it literally was because he was only standing a few feet away! Jesus also said to the Pharisees, "the kingdom of God is among you." Thus Jesus is saying the Kingdom of God is more than a geographical or physical kingdom, it is about having Jesus reign in your heart and in your life. It's fascinating to do a history of the kingdom of God so we can get a sense of what this prayer is all about.

In the beginning of creation, Christ ruled the whole cosmos ever since God said, "Let there be light"! Back then there was only ever the kingdom of God under Christ's rule and care. Heaven and earth were united under the common governance of God's King. However, as we all know, it all went very wrong after God created the first people.

After placing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden under the loving rule of their generous God, they decide to rebel. If you know the story well, Satan offered Adam and Eve a chance to live a different sort of life, in effect to live in a different kind of kingdom. A kingdom where they can take what they want for themselves, one where they can decide for themselves how to live and what to do, one where they can rule in the kingdom of their own life (summary of Genesis 3:1-7).

As you can imagine, this appealed quite strongly to our first parents, as it still does today in our own lives and hearts. As Frank Sinatra would put it, "I did it my way". Rather than trust in the Word of God and enjoy life in his household, Adam and Eve wanted to make their own life, under their own rules, and so chose a life of independence. Thus, a new kingdom was born. Not the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of humanity - a kingdom not of friendship with God, but of enmity and darkness.

Ever since the two kingdoms have been in conflict. However, in order to reverse the situation and win back the human race and bring about the destruction of the kingdom of darkness, God sent Jesus into the heart of the enemy territory. Jesus was born of the human race and walked amongst us.

As he gathered disciples, the kingdom of God began to grow from within the kingdom of darkness, and when Jesus died on the cross a decisive blow was struck against the kingdom of human rebellion.

The Kingdom of God Today: When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, he sat down at the right hand of the Father and began his rule over all creation. Today, right this moment, Jesus still reigns over all creation from heaven, just as he has done for the past two thousand years. Read John writes when he gets a glimpse into heaven, Revelation 5:11-13.

But notice Jesus' reign is not quite complete. There is still a part of creation that does not yield to his rule. All the angels in heaven worship Christ, all the creatures on earth and under the earth and on the sea worship Christ, but a large proportion of the human race still persists in rebellion. This is why the Lord's Prayer says, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done **on earth as it is in heaven.**"

Today, Christ reigns over all creation. The trees and the mountains know it. The birds and the animals know it. The angels know it. But as we look around us at all the people, it is clear that most of us don't know it. Thus, to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven is an evangelistic prayer. It is a prayer that is asking God to grow his kingdom today. It is a prayer that more and more people would come to know Jesus as their saviour and enter into his kingdom.

The Kingdom of God in the Future: But ultimately this prayer is a request that God's kingdom would come in all its fullness at the return of Jesus. Only then will God's Kingdom be completely and utterly realised on earth as it is in heaven. As J. John writes; "Have you realised how serious a thing it is to pray 'your kingdom come'? By praying this we are asking for our history to come to an end."

As Christians today we are very prone to misunderstanding our future hope as promised to us by Jesus in the Bible. Often we think heaven is the final destination for Christians. We imagine it to be a kind of spiritual realm where there is no time. Often we worry it might be like one long and unending, cosmic church service. However, this is very different from the Biblical hope of the New Heavens and the New Earth that Christ creates when he returns. The Christian hope is not heaven; the Christian hope is the New Creation. It is important to get our thinking straight on the future kingdom of God, as it is hard to look forward to something we know nothing about. As the writer of Hebrews says, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see," (Heb 11.1).

Firstly, our future is a physical future. Jesus has a resurrection body, the same body that went into the tomb came out of it, renewed and raised in power. The Apostle Paul gives a wonderful description of the glory of the resurrection bodies that await us at the return of Jesus, he concludes by saying, "just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven." (1 Corinthians 15:49).

Therefore, just as Jesus ate and drank with his friends after he rose from the dead, so we too will enjoy the physical aspects of bodily life such as eating and drinking. In fact, the first thing that will happen when Jesus returns is that he will lay-on a huge wedding banquet for all his people; a party to celebrate his marriage to us, the Church. Our resurrection bodies will never tire, grow old, or die, and we will enjoy them forever more as God intended.

Secondly, at the return of Jesus we will not abandon this world for another realm, rather, the kingdom of God is brought to earth. Notice the Lord's prayer, "your kingdom come, your will be done, **on earth** as it is in heaven."