

Thoughts for Sunday August 23rd 2020

Let's begin by worshipping our holy God as we sing 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwuDSw-9cUQ>

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
(Matthew 6.9-10)**

In our thoughts for the last two weeks we have been considering the Lord's Prayer. As we continue our thoughts today, what more can we learn from these well-known words from the first part of this prayer?

I notice that the prayer addresses God as 'Our Father', not 'My Father', and later in the prayer we use words like 'us' and 'our' rather than 'me' and 'my'. This reminds me that I am related to all other believers who come to God through Jesus and pray 'Our Father'. We can pray together as children of God, part of the same family.

I also notice that I am praying to a Father who is 'in heaven'. He is in the highest place, above all other powers and authorities, King of kings and Lord of lords, reigning over the whole universe. From this exalted position he sees everything that is going on in the world, he knows every need, he hears every prayer. This is the all-powerful, all-knowing God to whom I am bringing my requests.

Now that I have addressed God correctly as 'Our Father', I really want to get on with my prayers. I still have a whole list of things I want to pray for, so can I finally get down to business now and ask God for all the things I want him to give me or do for me?

Not yet!

Before I start praying for myself and the people around me, Jesus teaches that I need to pray about three very important matters regarding God himself:

1) *Hallowed be your name.* God's name represents who he is, his reputation, his honour. The word 'hallowed' is linked with 'holy'. When we 'hallow' God, we acknowledge that he is different, set apart from us - he is holy in a way that we certainly aren't. So we should approach him with an attitude of worship and reverent fear. Sadly we live in a world where most people don't take God very seriously. They do whatever they feel like doing without any regard for what God wants - that is very foolish, because one day we will all have to stand before God as our judge and give an account of our lives to him.

2) *Your kingdom come.* We live in the United Kingdom. Where is God's kingdom? It isn't a geographical location. God's kingdom is simply everywhere where God is

King – in every person who makes him King of their lives. If he really is King of our lives, then he is entitled to our obedience in every part of our lives. Which leads us to the third request...

3) *Your will be done*. It grieves us when we see all the evil in the world - violence, cruelty, poverty, injustice, discrimination, starvation, homelessness etc, as well as the inconsiderate behaviour of some people during the current pandemic. What a difference it would make if everyone did God's will. The world would be so much better!

These three requests are already wonderfully fulfilled in heaven. There, God's name is hallowed; he is recognised as King of kings and Lord of lords; his will is always done perfectly without question. In this prayer we are asking for the same to be true on earth, that everyone will recognise how wonderful and glorious God is, so that they hallow his name, gladly make him their king, and do his will in everything. Then the prophecy of Habakkuk 2:14 will be wonderfully fulfilled that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea". But what about me? It's easy for me to pray these things for other people, for the whole world, but I have to ask myself: Do I approach God with an attitude of reverent fear - when I pray and in my everyday life? Do I give God the attention and honour that he deserves? Is he really King of every part of my life? Do I really listen to him and obey him - always - in everything - so that I do his will perfectly all the time?

Today will I actually dare to ask God to show me if there are any areas in my life which I haven't surrendered totally to him, where I'm not allowing him to be King, where I'm not obeying him fully - and then be brave enough to listen to his answer?

Let's pray these words sincerely, for our world and for ourselves:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth - and in my life - as it is in heaven. Amen

Let's worship the one who is King of Kings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGnpfYqwO8k>

Points for thanksgiving and prayer

Pray for our nation: that in this ongoing crisis we will finally recognise that we need God, and turn back to him. Pray for wisdom and integrity for our government and all in authority. Pray that God will be merciful and the spread of the virus will be halted.

Pray for our church: that we will get to know God better, that we will support and encourage one another, and that we will find opportunities

to tell other people about Jesus. Pray for our Elders, that God will give them his wisdom in the decisions they make as they lead the church.

Pray for people who live alone, especially the elderly.

Pray for our young people as they return to school or university in September.

Pray for our outreach to people who live near the church, through the Good News paper. Some of our team hope to be able to visit local shops and businesses with the Horwich Angels – please pray about this opportunity.

We close with a song which we sang in our very first ‘Thoughts for Sunday’ back in March. The words are just as true today as they were then:

“None above him, none before him

All of time in His hands

For His throne it shall remain and ever stand

All the power all the glory I will trust in His name

For my God is the Ancient of Days”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPpGphzScjA>

Ray will be providing the ‘Thoughts for Sunday’ next week.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. (2 Corinthians 13:14)