

The Father's Frequency

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[0 : 0 0] Well, here we are at the second of our short series that we're doing, helping us think through this thing that we do as Christians called prayer. And so good is our God that he hasn't left us to figure prayer out on our own.

He's given us so graciously, so full of his goodness, he's given us the Lord's prayer, this model prayer that we find in Matthew chapter 6. And as I've been thinking through this whole subject of prayer this week, it's reminded me of the first ever television that we had when I was growing up.

So ladies and gentlemen, I give to you the Sony Triniton 1400. Everyone else have a Sony Triniton? This was the peak of technology back in the early 90s.

Let me tell you some of the features. 14 inches, symmetrical, love symmetrical things. Portable, colour, complete with, and you can't see it at the back there, slim TV extendable aerial.

And I remember it because after it had served its purpose as our family television, my brother and I inherited it as our PlayStation television. And the beauty of this TV was that to get it to work, now remember there's no such thing as pre-programmed channels with the Sony Triniton.

[1 : 1 9] What we had to do was spend the first five minutes flicking through the channels, tuning the circular buttons, desperately trying to find the frequency at which the TV and the PlayStation met before, behold, it was FIFA time.

This was the Sony Triniton 1400. And it's come to my mind this week as we've been thinking about prayer because Matthew chapter six is a prayer that Jesus gives his disciples.

Not for them to recite like robots, not for them to religiously chant as they go through the motions. No, he's given them this prayer so that they can tune their hearts to the Father's frequency.

This is the Lord's prayer. This is what Jesus is doing. He's tuning their hearts to the kingdom. Here is Jesus, Matthew chapter six, teaching his disciples how to pray. This prayer is not a standalone bit of teaching from Jesus.

Actually, it's part of a larger sermon that we would know as the Sermon on the Mount. And if you come with me to chapter five, beginning of verse one, you'll see that Jesus' disciples have come to him on the mountain.

[2 : 3 2] And Jesus is teaching them, not moralism, but he's teaching them that by God's grace, how the hearts of his transformed kingdom people beat.

And as you read this through, you see that the life of a follower of Christ is so radically different to the world around us. And so Jesus so loves his people that he knows that this side of glory, this side of heaven, that they will still struggle with sin in their hearts.

And so he gives them a prayer to pray that's going to help them tune their hearts to the father's frequency. And let's just acknowledge at the outset that that is wonderful news for us, because I don't know about you, but the natural frequency of my heart is to tune into me and it's to tune into my needs and it's to tune into my wants, not to tune into God.

Our hearts are full of what Tim Keller would call disordered loves. And as human beings, we're bent on chasing the wrong things. They were occupied so often with running after finite things that we tend to base our self-worth as human beings, that we tend to base our identity, we get it from things that don't matter a shot in the eyes of the God who made us.

And so here is Jesus. Remember, here he is. He's God in the flesh. And he's saying to his disciples, here is a prayer. Let me teach you a prayer that as you read it, that as you stop in it, that as you chew it, that as you think in it, that as you meditate on it, and as you pray it, it's going to redirect your affections and it's going to redirect your attentions by God's spirit to the greatness of God.

[4 : 31] English missionary Hudson Taylor used to get asked by his friends as they saw his burning passion to tell his friends about Jesus, that burning passion that took him to China.

They asked him how he started his every day. Here's what he said. Let me paraphrase it for you. He says, you wouldn't have a concert first and then afterwards turn to tune your instrument.

No. Likewise, I begin the day with the word of God and prayer to make sure that I begin my every day in harmony with him. In harmony with him.

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China. So God, through his word this morning, would challenge each one of us individually, but I think more so as a church body, as a people that meet here at Brunsfield.

He would challenge us if our hearts are connected to the Father's frequency. And we began last week thinking through Matthew 6, verse 9. As Jesus seeks to fix his disciples' gaze on who their God is.

[5 : 41] Our Father. In heaven. Hallowed be your name. Their God is in heaven.

He doesn't get tired. He isn't taken by surprise. He doesn't have a beginning. He doesn't have an end. Rather, he is the eternal one. He is the all-knowing one.

He is the ever-present one. He is the creator and sustainer of all things, including us. And so as we come face to face, as we tune our hearts first to who this God is, we find ourselves on our knees before him, worshipping in awe and at wonder at his greatness.

This is who this God is. What is his relationship to us? Distant spectator? Ruthless dictator? No. Take in the first two words.

Heavenly Father. In fact, if you scan your eyes over verses 5 to 15, you'll see that Jesus uses that word Father six times.

[6 : 51] God is a good Father. He is one who speaks to his people. He is one who cares for his people.

He is one who knows his people. And he is one who acts for the goods of his people. And he is so good and so gracious that he is the one who has sent his spirit.

To live in the very hearts of his people. You see, he is not a cold and distant God. He is a warm and gracious and loving good Father.

That's the kind of relationship that God's people have with this great God. What an amazing mystery. Take it in. Savor it. Taste it. That this great God in heaven.

Because of his son, Jesus Christ. And his cry of not my will be done, but your will be done. That saw him shed his blood on the cross. Making a way for all those who trust in him.

[7 : 52] To be forgiven. To be restored. To be reconciled to this God. So good is this God that he adopts us. And he calls us sons and daughters.

What a mind-boggling joy for the people of God. That the one we address in prayer. Is the great God of highest heaven. And yet, he is our Father.

And like the gymnast in the rings. It's so important that we know and we hold to both of those truths.

Because if you don't know God as Father. If you don't know him as the close one. Then you won't think that he cares for your life. But if you know him simply as the one who is.

If you don't know him rather as the one who is eternally holy. Then we won't think that he's in control. Sovereign control of every single thing that happens. In this world. So before we go any further.

[8 : 51] Let me just pause. And ask you to reflect. On whether this is the God that you know. Heavenly. Father. Because verse 10 of this prayer is.

Really just an overflow of a heart. That knows this. Heavenly Father. Your kingdom come. Your will be done. Do you see it? The overflow.

On earth. As it is in heaven. Now in Matthew's gospel. There's already been a lot of talk about the kingdom of God. Chapter 2. Let's get our Christmas hats on.

Herod. He hears about the king. Of God's kingdom being born. He fears the kingdom. Chapter 3. John the Baptist. As he comes on the scene. As he prepares the way for Jesus.

He declares the kingdom. And Jesus. In the early days of his ministry. If you want to check it out. Mid chapter 4. He declares. Proclaims the kingdom. It is here. Why is it here?

[9 : 49] Because the king's here. You see the kingdom of God. It centers in the rule. And the reign of God's king. As he comes to reign.

And rule. And live. In the very hearts. Of his people. As the kingdom of light. Breaks into the darkness. Bringing forgiveness.

And restoration. And one day culminating. In God's king. Jesus. Taking his people home. To be in his very presence. Worshipping this heavenly father.

Where Jesus' kingdom will be won. Where sin is a distant memory. Where every tear will be wiped away. Where every hurt will be healed. Where suffering will be over.

Where sickness will be banished. Where perfect justice will be perfectly executed. Where the news will no longer be filled. With murder and rape.

[10 : 47] Where refugees will no longer have to flee. Their country of birth. For their safety. Why? Because Jesus. The king of glory.

Has won. And has ushered in. His kingdom. Of life. And light. Of fullness. And joy. Where he reigns.

And where the transformed people. That he has won to himself. Worship him. In the very presence of God. So Jesus says to his disciples. Matthew chapter 6.

Pray for that kingdom. Pray for that kingdom to come. Yes. Long for that day to come. But would you pray. And would you act.

To see that kingdom known. And to see that kingdom seen. And to see that kingdom extended. In this day. See to pray for the kingdom of come.

[11 : 44] Is at its very heart. At its very centre. Do you see? It's a missionary prayer. Stemming from a heart. That longs to see this heavenly father. His name put in lights.

And longs to see people. Men and women. Boys and girls across this planet. Come to know. King Jesus for themselves. This is the kingdom of God. And all I want to do.

In the short amount of time. That we have remaining. Is just to tease out for us. The things. That as we pray. For this kingdom to come. And as we pray.

For God's will to be done. On earth as it is in heaven. Where this prayer. Should cause us. To look. Now you know me well enough. I hope to know.

That the best things in sermons. Come in threes. So here are three places. That this. Prayer. Causes us. To look. And hopefully this is really practical. For our lives. Here's the first one.

[12 : 37] It causes us to look outside. As we look at some of the things. On our news screens. As we hear. We've even heard it this morning. The catastrophic effect.

That sin has had on this world. It should cause our hearts to break. Something deep inside us. Our soul should cry out. When we see it. That this is.

Not how. It was meant to be. And here's the great thing. That is exactly how Jesus feels. What do we see. As he comes across. The deaf and mute.

Man in Mark chapter 7. You can check it out afterwards. What does he do? He sighs. Deeply. Sighs. Deeply. It's the same idea.

That Paul uses in Romans chapter 8. Again check it out afterwards. When Paul talks about. The entire created order. Groaning. Longing. For God. Its creator.

[13 : 31] To restore it. It should be our soul reaction. When we see. When we see. And encounter. Life in our sin battered world.

Come Lord Jesus. Come Lord Jesus. Let me ask you. When was the last time. That you groaned? Some of you may have heard. Of the international justice mission.

There are a group of. Christian lawyers. Who help. Work. Sorry. Help victims. Of human rights abuse. Here. Let me just read you. Some prayer points. From one of their. Latest prayer updates.

Three things. There are 27 million slaves. In the world today. Did you know. There are actually. More slaves today. Than there were. In William Wilberforce's time. More than any other point.

In human history. Would you pray. There are thousands of widows. Who are literally. Fighting for their lives. Because their land. And their only source. Of provision. Has been violently stolen. Away from them. Called land grabbing.

[14 : 27] Would you pray. Each year. Nearly 2 million children. Are exploited. In the global. Commercial sex trade. And they have. No one to defend them.

Would you pray. This is our world. Let me ask you. Does it. When you hear. That kind of stuff. Does it cause. Your heart to groan.

Does it cause. Your heart. To cry. Would you come. Lord Jesus. Would you come. Lord Jesus. Would you. Make it right. Would your kingdom come. Would your will be done.

On earth. As it is in heaven. It's a cry. That should move us. Not just to pray. It should. Cause us to. Act. To see our part. To play our part. Rather. In seeing the kingdom of Jesus.

Represented. In our world. And in our nation. For the good of our world. Yes. But more so. So that. People can see. And they can hear. About Jesus. And they can come.

[15 : 23] To know this father. This heavenly father. The one who is in control. For themselves. Because what does God. Call himself. A strong refuge. And a shield.

And a defender. For his people. You know. I read a fascinating quote. This week. From freelance columnist. Matthew Paris. He wrote an article. For the times. In 2008.

With the title. And get this one. In your ears. As an atheist. I truly believe. That Africa needs God. That was the title. Of his article. As an atheist. I truly believe.

That Africa needs God. He writes this. This observation. I realize. Stubbornly. Refuses to fit. With my world view. Indeed. It has embarrassed. My very core conviction.

That there is no God. But the facts. Are simply inescapable. I've become convinced. Of the enormous contribution. That Christianity. Makes to Africa. Which is sharply distinct. From the work of NGOs.

[16:18] Government projects. And international aid efforts. Because I see. That these things. Will not do. In Africa. Education and training alone.

Will not do. In Africa. Christianity. Changes people's hearts. It brings spiritual transformation. It brings rebirth.

And the evidence. Is real. And the change. Is good. Isn't that a fascinating quote. From a man of no faith. That he sees. That Christianity.

Jesus. Is alive. And is living. And his people. That that really makes. A long lasting difference. It's a conviction. That drove. Fiona. And Christy.

And Ruth. And the rest of that team. To Romania. It really is. The gospel really is. Good news. For all of the world. It's the conviction. That drives us. Each month. To focus on a country.

[17:13] Of the world. At our prayer meeting. And to find out. How we can best pray for it. We're praying for Jordan. This Wednesday night. Please come along. 7.45. It's a country.

That desperately needs. Our prayers. As we pray for the kingdom. To come friends. As we pray for God's will. To be done. It should cause us. To look outside. Here's the second place.

It should cause us. To look beside. We pray for this kingdom. To come. We're praying for. Our life together. As a church. Some of you might remember.

That old Sunday school classic. Let me attempt this one. Joy is the flag. Flowing high. From the castle of my heart. From the castle of my heart.

From the castle of my heart. Joy is the flag. Flowing high. From the castle of my heart. He is in residence there. So let me. I won't attempt that note.

[18:06] Dreaming that I could hit that note. But let me ask you. On a serious note. As people would look into. Our lives individually. From the outside. We look into our life corporately. Would they see the king in residence here?

Would they see it? As they look at our lives. As they look at our public lives. As they probably look at our private lives. What would they see? As they watch us in action. As they watch how we talk.

About one another. To one another. As they see how we serve. Would they see the king in residence? Or would they see. A people. Of the world.

Who are simply just dressing up. In religious clothes. I think this is a challenge. That it's brought to me this week. To think about that. Would people see. The kingdom in my life.

Because really as a church. We're just a little kingdom outpost. Who happen to be. In this neighbourhood of Brunsfield. Again. What does Jesus pray? In the Sermon of the Mount. Verse 13 and 14. You are the salt of the earth.

[19:08] He says to his people. And you are the light of the world. And you are that city on the hill. Walking up Castle Street this morning. Into town.

What do we see? From Castle. You can't escape it can you? From miles around. You can see the castle there. This is what Jesus is saying about his church. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Would people see us. And our lives in action.

And would they see. That the king is alive. And the king is in residence amongst us. It's the best apologetic. One of the best apologetics. That we can offer to the world.

For the truth of the transforming power of the gospel. Is simply by our life together as a church. Young and old. Male and female. Rich and poor. Suits and tracksuits.

Because as the world looks in and says. Question mark. Divided. The gospel says no. United. In Jesus Christ.

[20 : 03] Divided. No. Made one. As we display this glorious unity and diversity. As we live out this kingdom life and community. What a marvelous exclamation mark we make.

To the point that Jesus is Lord. Now after Alex and I got married. Our first home was. In this little area of Bristol. Called Montpellier.

Montpellier was on the border of this. Really rough and ready area of Bristol. Called St Paul's. In fact when I moved to Bristol. The estate agent described this place to me. As bohemian and earthy. But I love estate agents sometimes.

Bohemian. And earthy. But I soon realized what those words meant. Because this was an area that was notorious. For its diversity. And this was an area that was notorious. For its tensions.

There's a story told. About a local MP. Who walked into one of the local churches. Down in Bristol one day. And he walked in. And what did he see? He saw people laughing together. He saw people eating together.

[21 : 03] He saw people weeping together. He saw people praying together. He saw people laughing together. He saw people hugging. And he remarked to one of the. Sorry. He remarked to the minister. Right after service finished.

Ran up to him and said. I spent millions of pounds. Every year. Trying to get people from that community. To speak to people from that community. And I walk in here.

And I see you do it for free. What an astounding. Apologetic we make to the watching world. As they see our unity. In diversity. I often go to these ministers lunches.

That we have with other pastors. Around the city. And we meet up. And we always ask each other. How can we best be praying for your church? Do you know what my answer is? Every time. Every time.

Would you please pray for our unity? Not that we're falling apart. Not that we're falling out. But because we realise. That the easiest thing for the devil to do. Is to get into our unity and diversity.

[22 : 02] And to break it. What does that say to the watching world? Would you pray for our unity? Would you pray that preferences would be set aside. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Would you pray that we would all be about serving one another? Would you pray that the gospel would be seen in the way that we love one another? And do you know so often what the other minister.

When I ask him what I can pray for says back. He says I was about to say exactly the same thing. Friends would you join me this week? Would you join me this year? In praying for our unity.

In praying that we would display. This counter-cultural gospel community. That Jesus Christ has birthed here. Would you pray for our unity? And would you join me in praying for one another?

What a powerful apologetic we make to this watching world. As we pray for the kingdom to come. As we pray for God's will to be done.

[23 : 00] It causes us to look beside. He's the last place it causes us to look. Inside. That the kingdom of God would advance in our own hearts.

And in our own lives. As God transforms us by his spirit more into the likeness of Jesus his son. Remember in the context of Matthew's gospel. Jesus has been outlining. What the people of his counter-cultural kingdom.

What they look like. Those poor in spirit. The meek. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The merciful. The pure in heart. The peacemakers. Those who are all about. Not retribution. But turning the other cheek. Those who seek forgiveness.

Those who pray for their enemies. Those who give from a heart. Not of show. But simply out of praise to God. These are all the hallmarks of God's people. And so when we pray.

[24 : 00] We're asking that God would do his pruning. And growing work in our hearts. And in our lives. So that we'd see this fruit. This kingdom fruit.

It's quite a common thing isn't it. Amongst parents to. Maybe you did this when you grew up. To kind of track the growth of their children. What do parents do? We've not done this yet.

But I'm working on it. What do they do? They get you to stand against the wall. And they just mark your growth. Don't they? And what do they do next year? They're hoping that you've grown. They mark it here. And mark it here.

Well let me ask you. In your Christian life friends. Do you see growth? Do you see growth? Do you look back over the course. Of the last little while. And by God's grace. Simply by his grace.

Do you see those. Evidences of fruit in your life. Do you see the rule of Jesus Christ. This kingdom life. Taking over your heart. And your soul.

[24 : 54] How often. Do we fail to ask. And this is where I was convicted this week. How often do we fail to ask. That our heavenly father would help us grow.

By his grace. By his spirit. I found myself this week. Lord I struggle with anger. Would you help me by your grace. To be a peacemaker.

Lord inside I struggle with patience. I find that very difficult. Especially with two little ones. I struggle with patience. But by your grace. Would you help me to trust you more. And to love you more.

And to know your good hand. And it's perfect timing in my life. Friends how often do we fail to pray. That God would help us grow. By his grace. In the words of.

Former slave trader turned minister. John Newton. I ask the Lord that I might grow. In faith. And love. And every grace. Might more of his salvation know.

[25 : 52] And seek more earnestly. His face. As we pray for the kingdom to come. As we pray for God's will to be done. It will cause us to look. Three places.

Outside. B side. Inside. Why do we make that our prayer this week. As we pray the kingdom to come. These are the three places that we would look. As we close.

Let me take you back to the Sony Triniton. Can't get enough of that TV. It's probably somewhere in the attic. Somewhere I'm sure. But let me ask us as we close. As individuals. But as a church.

Brothers and sisters. Are our hearts tuned. To the Father's frequency. Before I pray to close. Why don't we just take a moment of quiet.

And I invite you just in the stillness. Just as I. Read to you this. The opening words of the Lord's Prayer. That we've been looking about. Looking at last week and this week. Let me just.

[26 : 51] Read them to us. And help us meditate on them as we close. Let's bow our heads. Just before I pray. And let me read these to us. Our Father.

Our Father. Our Father. Who art in heaven. Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done. Amen. On earth.

As it is in heaven. Glorious heavenly Father. What an amazing.

Mystery. That because of Jesus. We can call you. The one who threw stars into space. We can call you Father.

[28 : 09] And so we ask that. By your pure. Undeserved grace. That you show us each and every day. That you would fill us all. Afresh.

With a hunger. And a desire. To see your kingdom come. In. The outside. And in the B side.

And in the inside. All for your glory. Of the upbuilding of your church. In this nation we pray. Amen. Thank you. Amen. And a son of a heaven.

Good. Thank you. Good. Yes. Good. Thank you. Good. Okay. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good.

He's been here. Good. birthday. Good.