The Big Story/Kingdom Come

The Lord's Prayer

Mike Colaw September 2, 2023

Opening Illustration:

Throughout history religious people have had a hard time selecting heroes to be proud of. There are three types of antiheroes that always seem to arise.

I actually wrote a longer blog on this if you are curious. You can find it at luke117.com. It’s entitled “Christians need to choose better heroes.” In the blog post I offer more information on why these antihero religious leaders always seem to rise up.

Three religious antiheroes we love to follow.

The Macabre:

These leaders excel at piously pointing out what is wrong with culture. They are often intelligent, loud, passive observers and cultural gurus. These podcasters, authors, comedians and professors are great at articulating all that’s broken. They are masters of doom and gloom; making fear famous has made them famous.

What they get right:

They are often excellent and articulate observers of darkness.

What they get wrong:

They choose not to talk about or have completely lost the ability to wrap words around beautiful things. Their eyes are on the darkness and their hearts are turning dark too, all while saying true things.

The Conquistador:

This person is a conqueror. They rightly see what is wrong and rightly want to take action. The problem is they seem to always justify setting aside compassion and charity. They constantly voice the truth that there are times to flip tables (Matthew 21:12-13) but are unaware that Jesus did other things too. To them every situation requires setting aside compassion and charity for the greater good.

What they get right:

They are often right about what is wrong. They are also correct that passive observance isn’t what Christians should do.

What they get wrong:

They seem to miss that deconstruction isn’t the end game and a heart given to this is a heart that misses the core of Christ’s heart.

The Conciliatory:

This person believes what is most loving is most permissive. They rightly want to be peace makers and desperately hate making people feel bad. They love parables like the woman caught in adultery but seem to miss the “go and sin no more” part (John 8).

What they get right:

They love reconciliation and want people to feel accepted.

What they get wrong:

In an attempt to be “inclusive” they may be excluding people from the actual way to heaven. Jesus says that He is the exclusive only way to God (John 14:6). You cannot share the love of Jesus without sharing what Jesus came to share with the people He perfectly loves.

This all begs a great question.

What kind of Christians should we follow, elevate and work to become?

Let’s go to the Lord’s Prayer.

Matthew 6:9–13 (ESV):

Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

History:

A Rabbi teaching their disciples prayer wasn’t uncommon. Memorable prayers were used as poetic tools to help their followers remember truths about God, others and the world around them. This is made evident in Jewish texts like the Talmud and Mishnah.

Literary Context:

Jesus purposefully took attributes of existing Jewish prayers but reworded them to be much less formal and much more familial. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, He is teaching his disciples what the Kingdom of God looks like and how they are supposed to live. It begins with intimacy.

Text:

“Our Father.” Jesus begins by making our engagement with God personal. It isn’t a business transaction, a deal or a political truce. It’s a child to a parent.

“Your Kingdom come, your will be done.” We are to bring the attributes of our true family into this world. This is why we can’t merely be haters of evil. We must be fans of what is good.

“Give us today our daily bread.” We read this and we think, “give ‘me’ today…” The teaching of Jesus is plural. We are asking to participate in sharing God’s generosity. Think familial, l. ike a mom offering her children a great meal.

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Reconciliation is a key component of Christianity. Forgiveness isn’t so much a feeling but a choice to act in wise charity towards those who need it. Including our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Romans 5:8). Love and forgiveness is not open permission, but wise consideration of what may help people find Jesus best.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” We think about this in the singular. “Lead ‘me’…” It’s a prayer for “us,” plural. Notice it calls to have humans delivered from the evil one. The language implies that we are family and some of us have been abducted by principalities and powers that will destroy us (Ephesians 6:12). Our brothers brainwashed by Satan are not our enemies. We want them rescued!

Final Thoughts:

The Lord’s Prayer is more than a simple framework. It is a beautiful poem that shows us what should be in our hearts. We need to choose, follow and be Christian leaders that truly have the heart of God.

Next Steps Cards:

What is God saying to you? How has this message illuminated the heart of God in your life?