

# Meeting With Christ

---

Practical and Exegetical Studies on the Words of Jesus Christ

Yves I-Bing Cheng, M.D., M.A.

Based on sermons of Pasteur Eric Chang

www.meetingwithchrist.com

## THY KINGDOM COME

---

### Matthew 6:10

In chapter 6 of the gospel of Matthew, v. 10, we read these words.

*Matthew 6:10. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven.*

We will continue today our study of the Lord's Prayer. And I would like to look at this verse, Matthew 6:10, in connection with the statement that Jesus makes immediately before He introduces the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 6:8, Jesus says this: *Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.*

### The importance of prayer

The Lord Jesus is saying that before we even ask anything to God, He already knows what is in our mind. Now this raises an obvious question. If this is so, if God already knows all the things that we have need of, why should we pray to Him? Does God really need our prayers? And if we say that He does need our prayers, then in what ways does God need our prayers?

Some people have answered this puzzling question with a statement like this. 'It is not that God needs our prayers, but that God wishes to hear our prayers.' So they are saying that God doesn't need our prayers but that He would like to hear our prayers. And I suspect that this explanation represents the thinking of many Christians. Some Christians feel that prayer is not very essential as far as God is concerned. They might not say it explicitly but their attitude shows that they agree with this opinion. That if they didn't pray, God wouldn't have missed anything anyway. Nothing of great importance anyway. It's like the salt or the pepper that we put on the table. It makes the food taste nicer but it is not absolutely essential. If you have it, it's great. But if you don't, you can still manage without it. Nobody is going to die from that. You can still eat the food. If we think like this, then clearly there is not much incentive to pray.

Is this how we should regard prayer? Let me tell you this. It matters very much to God whether we pray or not. I would like that to sink deep into your hearts. It matters to God that we pray. He does miss our prayers when we don't pray. And it is not just a matter of having some extra icing on the cake.

### God wants our prayers

Does God need our prayers? Well, it depends on what we mean by need. If we mean that God depends for His existence upon our prayers, then clearly He doesn't need our prayers in that particular

sense. But that is not the only sense of the word need. We need a lot more than just what is required for our survival. Let's put it this way. Does the husband need the love of his wife? Does the wife need the love of her husband? If we mean by need whether he or she would survive physically without that love, then obviously, he or she doesn't need that love. You are not going to die tomorrow because your spouse ceases to love you. Physically, you will continue to exist.

But we do need love. Everybody needs love. From the moment we are born, each one of us thirsts for a relationship in which we will feel loved. And the issue is not a matter of surviving physically, but to make life rich, meaningful and purposeful. Life is not just about eating and sleeping and working. It is much richer than that.

The Scripture makes it clear for us that God loves us and that He wants our love. If we say that He wants our love, why should He want it if He had no need for it? Did He create us just for the fun of it? No, the Scripture tells us that God wants our love and that He needs our prayers, not because His existence depends upon it anymore than my existence depends on my wife's love for me. But God wants our love and needs our prayers because that's how He wants us to have a meaningful relationship with Him.

It matters to God that we love Him. It matters to God that we pray to Him. Not that His existence depends on it, but because God, in His nature, is love. And love does not make fun of other people. Love doesn't say to others, 'Well, I don't really need you. That you pray or not doesn't really matter. I suffer no loss.' Love cares and is concerned about others. And that concern means that you matter to God.

God said to Israel, *He that touches you touches the apple of My eye* (Zechariah 2:8). If you know how sensitive is the apple of your eye, then you know how much you matter to God. God was saying to Israel and to us today, 'You matter to Me so much that if anyone hurts you the slightest, it is like touching the inside of My eye.' That's how much God is concerned about us.

And because we matter to God, it matters to Him whether we pray or not. If you love a person, you want to hear from that person. You long for a letter to come. You are waiting for the telephone to ring. And so, God wants to hear from us. And prayer is the spiritual means of communication with God. In that sense, God wants and needs our prayers.

## **Knowing our needs**

Now, we haven't dealt with our initial question. Granted that we matter to God. Granted that He loves us. But being God, He is omniscient. He already knows what we need. The Bible says that before even the words are formed on our lips, He already knows what our need is. So what's the point for me to pray to Him?

You see, the point is not whether God knows what we need. The question is whether we know what we need. And it is essential to God that we come to realize what we need. Look at it from the point of view of salvation. First, you have to realize your own need of salvation, that without God, you are lost. The point is not whether God knows that you are lost. God already knows that. The point is whether you know that you are lost and that you are in need of salvation. This point is essential because unless you know your own need, you are not going to do anything about it. Though God may know that you are lost, He must wait until you realize that you are lost and that you need Him to be saved before He can rescue you. That's the first point.

## **Turning to God to meet our needs**

The second point is this. Though you may know your need and want to do something about it, it doesn't necessary follow that you will call upon God to meet that need. You may not turn to God for help. You can take the matter into your own hands. And there are many ways to numb your need for God and His salvation. Just look at the world around you and see what are the things that people run after. So here we see why God wants us to pray even if He already knows what is in our mind. It is not whether He knows our need but whether we know our need. And when we know our need, whether we will call on Him to meet our need.

This has a practical bearing on prayer which is very obvious. Think about this. If I don't sense a need, I will not ask God for that particular thing. Or if I do sense that need but I feel that I can meet that need myself, then I will also not pray to God for that particular thing. God is going to wait until we turn to Him in prayer before He meets our need. He doesn't want people who have no sense of need, and have a sense of their own sufficiency. What happens when you continuously spoil a child is that you remove in him any consciousness of his needs. And the danger as he grows up is that he begins to feel self-sufficient, that he becomes arrogant, inflated with a false sense of his own importance.

Imagine what would happen if God were to meet our need without first waiting for us to realize our need. Why should God wait till we know our needs? Because otherwise, we would never have any need. We would never be conscious of any need at all. We would never come to God at all for help because we never had a need in the first place. Do you see how God uses the needs to draw us to Himself so that we may find the answer to our needs in Him? We tend to see a need as a burden while in fact, it is a spiritual opportunity to see the love and goodness of God when God meets our needs.

## **Needs, will, and prayer**

Now understand that our needs and our will are closely related, and that prayer is a matter of the will. That when we ask of God in prayer, we are actually exercising our will. So it is this. First, we must understand our need. And having understood our need, we exercise our will in a specific direction. You see, the need is that which exercises our will most specifically. If you have no need, you have no decision to make. You have nothing on which you have to exercise your will and deal with the question of what I am going to do about this need.

But when I have a need, my will is involved because I have to make a decision about it. The need is something that faces us with the responsibility to make a choice. My decision is involved. You take away the need and the necessity for a choice is gone. Choice is always made in the face of a need, in the face of having to confront a decision and to deal with it.

This is important to emphasize because you see, God does not treat us as robots or tape recorders, but as responsible people, capable of making their own choice. God wants us to exercise our will when we fellowship with Him. And He will let us struggle for a time. Because He wants us to be convinced that there is no one else who can meet that need but Him. This is one reason why in prayer, you will find a delay. God doesn't necessarily answer right away. He wants us to struggle with that need until we realize that there is nobody else who can meet that need but God. And when God answers that need, we can appreciate the wisdom and the power of God. That's how God makes us strong spiritually.

## **God respects our personality**

You know, becoming a Christian never means that you will be depersonalized. Some Christians seem to think that the ideal of the Christian life is that you don't exercise your will anymore. You are so controlled by the Spirit of God that you have ceased to exercise your will. And so we have people who think that they are so spirit-filled that they have no desire of their own whatsoever. They never say yes, they never say no. Everything is maybe, if it is the will of God of course. They just don't seem to be able to make up their own mind about anything. This is supposedly a Spirit-guided Christian.

These people might mean well, but this is to be ignorant of the will of God. The Word of God doesn't tell us that spiritual Christians are Christians who have ceased to exercise their will. To die to self doesn't mean that you have no more will. It simply means dying to sin, to the old way of life. Your whole mind, your whole will is renewed, regenerated. In the Bible, we read a lot about the control of the Spirit. But there is nothing, not one single verse, that says that we are controlled by the Spirit of God in the sense that we have ceased to exercise our will.

God wants us to exercise our will, and to exercise it to the limit. He is going to wait when with our own will, we say, 'Your will be done on earth and in my life, as it is in heaven.' He is going to wait for us to say that. And until then, there is a high chance that nothing will happen because He is not going to take His will and cram it down our throat.

God is going to wait until we realize that there is no other way to meet our deepest needs but the will of God. So long as we think that there is another solution to our needs, God will remain far from us. Nothing will happen until that day when we say, 'Lord, Your will be done on earth. Your will be done in my life as in heaven.' Then we will see the power and glory of God in action.

## **Will and sin**

This brings me to an important point in regard to sin. Think about this. That sin is precisely that thing which is a violation of another person's will. Have you ever realized that? Sin is the violation, or the removal, or the cancellation of somebody else's will.

Take robbery. What is robbery? Robbery or stealing is to remove from you something that you didn't want to give away. The robber takes away something that belongs to you against your will. Or take rape. Rape is the action of forcing a person, most of the time a female, to have a sexual intercourse against her will. Or when you murder someone, you actually destroy the other person. You wipe out the possibility for him to use his will at all. Think of any sin you like and you see that sin is always the attempt to destroy the will of the other person, or at least to act contrary to his will.

When you understand this, you realize that sin never treats another person as a person. But on the other hand, when you turn this around, it follows that righteousness always treats another person as a person. It never violates another person's will. It never reduces another person to a thing. This means also that God, who is righteous, never reduces us to an object. He always respects our will even when He doesn't agree with it. God wants us to exercise our will in all freedom. And whatever we decide, He will respect it, even if it means that we may make the decision to reject His gift of salvation.

So here we must understand the importance of all this for prayer. God wants us to exercise our will in prayer. It must be my own desire for this particular thing. We read a lot in the Bible about the fellowship of the Spirit (Philippians. 2:1). You can have fellowship only if two people have a communion and fellowship of wills. If I cease to be a person, you cannot have fellowship with me anymore because I have no more will. I have nothing to respond to. You can't have fellowship with a

car or a tape recorder. You can only have fellowship with a person when that person is able to exercise his will.

### **Your kingdom come**

Now, after saying all this, let's conclude. Let's go back to our verse. And I want to show you the clear relationship between our will and the kingdom of God. Jesus asks us to pray, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven.* What does Jesus mean by the kingdom of God? It means, *Your will be done on earth as in heaven.* The definition is given to us right here in the Lord's Prayer. The kingdom of God is established on earth through the harmony of our will with the will of God when we ask of our own choice, of our own desire, through God working in our hearts certainly, but of our own choice nevertheless, that His will be done in our lives as well as in the world. In this way, heaven comes into our soul. And the kingdom of God is established in our lives.

Realize also that when we ask God's kingdom to come, we are actually saying, 'Come Lord Jesus.' For the kingdom of God will be established perfectly on earth when Jesus comes back again, at His second coming. In fact, that was a prayer that was often prayed in the early church. We find this for example at the very end of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 16:22, we have the word *Maranatha*, an Aramaic word which means, *O Lord, come!*

So when we pray, *Your kingdom come*, let us remember that we are saying in that prayer, 'Lord Jesus, come!' Every true Christian longs for Jesus' coming. And I hope that this is also a burning desire in your heart, as you freely submit your will to the will of God in order to establish His kingdom on earth.