

The Lord's Prayer: Prayer of Surrender
Philippians 4:11-13
August 8, 2010

Today we're going to continue in our series as we go through The Lord's Prayer. Last week we learned that it is through prayer that we can gain inner peace. Remember Philippians 4 says, "*Don't worry about anything. Instead pray about everything and the peace of God will rule your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*" So God says the more you pray the more peace you have. The less you pray the less peace you'll have. You can either worry or pray as you go through life.

As you think about your life, I think you will agree that it's really quite easy to lose your internal peace. One minute everything's cool. You're kicked back, laid back and it feels good and you're in serenity. And the next minute you get a phone call and you're stressed out. It's very easy to lose your peace.

Today I want to suggest to you that the next phrase of the Lord's Prayer is, in itself, a great prayer that can help you deal with anxiety and stress in your life.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

So, first: What does *Thy kingdom come* mean?

It refers to the rule and reign of God in the world. It's all that God wants to do. All God's purposes are accomplished in the kingdom of God.

Where is the kingdom of God? It is wherever Jesus is allowed to be king. Since Jesus is king in heaven right now, the kingdom of God is in heaven. One day when Christ comes back to reign on earth, the kingdom of God will be on earth. And Jesus says whenever he is king in your heart, the kingdom of God is within you. So the kingdom of God is wherever Jesus is allowed to be king.

The second phrase, *Thy will be done*, actually complements and explains the first phrase. God's kingdom is wherever God's will is done. So if God's will is being done in your life, that's where the kingdom of God is. It's inside you.

What does it mean to pray *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done*? It means three things.

1. Accept God's plan.

Instead of my own plan for my life I accept His purpose, His will for my life. Part of accepting God's plan can be very difficult. It is accepting the things that you can't change. There are a lot of aspects to your life that you did not choose and you cannot change. You didn't choose your

birth or your death. You don't choose what other people do to you. You have to accept the things that can't be changed.

Paul understood this. In Philippians 4 he says this *"I've learned to be satisfied with the things that I have and with everything that happens. I know how to live when I'm poor and I know how to live when I have plenty. I've learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. I can do all things through Christ because He gives me strength."*

Notice three things about what Paul is saying:

- First, acceptance of God's plan is a learned experience. You are not by nature a contented person. Neither am I. By nature we are discontented. God says contentment is something you learn. You learn to accept the things you can't change.
- Second, it's a choice. Paul says I choose to be happy in spite of my circumstances.
- Third, he says it's possible only through Christ's strength.

You need to learn this first step of the Prayer of Surrender: I accept God's plan even when I don't understand it. Why? Because the truth is most of the hard things that happen in your life God doesn't explain. God may choose to remain silent when you're going through that problem, that trial, that difficulty, or that circumstance that you don't like.

Think back to when you were in grade school. In grade school the teacher would pass out the test, you would sit down and start taking the test and he or she would sit at the front in silence while you took the test. The teacher is always silent when the test is being given.

That's true in life. That's true with God. All of us are going to have tough times in life. And in response to that tough time, you may decide to pray. Why is this happening? What's going on in my life? Help! If what you get in response to your prayers is silence, then perhaps you are experiencing a test. Pastor Rick Warren says, "Any time God is silent in your life *it is a test*. God is saying, 'Are you going to trust Me, even when you don't feel Me? Are you going to trust Me even when you can't see Me or hear Me and you feel like I'm a million miles away? Will you accept My plan, My wisdom, My love, My goodness even when there's nothing emotional. You don't feel any goosebumps, you don't feel anything special in your life. Will you trust Me when I am silent?' "

Why does this bring peace of mind? Because one of the greatest barriers to your peace of mind is your demand for an explanation. Anytime you ask God, "Why?" you are setting yourself up to be disappointed.

There are a few reasons why you may not get an explanation from God.

- God doesn't owe you an explanation. Remember, God is God and you are not. So God doesn't have to explain to me why He does everything.
- You probably wouldn't understand the explanation even if He gave it to you. You are only thinking about your present pain. God is acting in terms of his will for all eternity.
- Explanations never comfort us. Some of you have had pain in your past and through reading or therapy or counsel or talking with friends, you've figured out *why* certain things happened in your life. Did that comfort you? No. It gave an explanation. It gave you wisdom. But it didn't relieve the pain. Explanations rarely comfort us. That's why when God lets you go through a situation, He doesn't always explain it. Instead of offering an explanation, He offers Himself. His presence. Because what you need when you're in pain is God's presence not an explanation. And God has said I will be with you always. I'm always with you. I care about you. You will never go through anything on your own.

This is the first step to the Prayer of Surrender. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.* God, I want Your plan in my life.

Many people pray the serenity prayer. But did you know that the serenity prayer that you most likely know has been edited. It has been shortened. Most people only know the first three lines. The actual prayer has eight more lines and that's where the power is.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

“God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace
Taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it;
Trusting that You will make all things right
If I surrender to Your will
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

The rest of the prayer explains a whole lot about the first. You're not going to have the serenity of The Serenity Prayer unless you pray the rest of it.

2. Surrender to God's control.

We don't tend to like this word "surrender". Surrender means raising the white flag. Surrender means giving up, forfeiting the game, saying, "I've lost. You've won." However, when it comes to the world and God, it's the only pathway to peace. "I surrender to Your control, God."

Every morning you get up you make a decision, whose going to run your life? You or God? Whose agenda are you going to follow today? Yours or God's? Whose going to be calling the shots? You ...or God?

The Bible says in Psalm 37:7 "*Surrender yourself to the Lord and wait patiently for Him.*"

What happens if we don't do it? Romans 8:6 "*If a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, there is death. But if his thinking is controlled by the Spirit, there is life and peace.*" How do you get life and peace? By being controlled by the Spirit, by surrendering yourself to the Lord and waiting for Him.

Some say the greatest barrier to surrendering your life totally to God is resentment. You may not want to admit this but there's probably something in your life that you're mad at God about. You still blame Him for those disappointments. You're upset with Him because life hasn't turned out the way you wanted it to. And that underlying resentment keeps you from totally surrendering to God. You're mad at God. You're blaming Him for your unhappiness.

Let's get real practical. What is it in your life that you're still angry at God about? Can a Christian be angry at God? Without a doubt!

Try not to blame God. Just relax and say, "God! Thy will be done! Thy kingdom come. I accept Your plan. I surrender to Your control." Your war with God is keeping you from peace.

3. Trust in God's care.

Your life is never going to be problem free. IAS is a reality of life. (IAS – It's Always Something!) If it's not one thing it's another.

By the way, there are few reasons why you will have problems in life :

- We live in a fallen world. In a nutshell, Adam choked. Adam blew it. He sinned. Sin entered the world and we have lived in an imperfect world ever since.
- You have an enemy. His name is Satan. Satan wants to mess your life up. He wants to destroy you. He wants to make you ineffective as a child of God. So you not only have the fallenness of the world working against you, you've got the devil after you, too.

- You sometimes make poor decisions. You make a lot of dumb decisions, dumb choices and so do I. Most of my problems I bring on myself.

If you've got your own poor decision making and you've got the devil and you've got the fallen world it's no wonder. That's enough problems to keep you going the rest of your life. But let me give you one more thing to think about.

- Sometimes problems are nobody's fault. Sometimes God just allows them for a different reason.

One time Jesus was walking down the street and His disciples saw a man who was born blind. The disciples said, "Lord, this guy was born blind. Who did something wrong? Was it his parents who sinned, or did he sin?" That's still a contemporary approach to problems. Today when you get a problem you say it was either caused by your parents or by someone else. It's either blame your parents, blame yourself, or blame someone else. But Jesus said, nobody caused this man's problem. *This happened so that God's power could be displayed in this man's life.*

You have to learn how to have peace in spite of your problems and in spite of conflict. If you're only at peace when you're on vacation you're going to have very little peace in your life. You have to learn to trust God's care even when you have problems.

Whatever the source of your problem, the best reason for that issue being there at all is so that God's power can be displayed in your life.

If you accept God's plan for your life, you surrender to God's control in your life and trust God's care for your life. Then God says I'm going to take care of all your needs.

Is there turmoil going on in your heart? Are you experiencing anxiety and turmoil and stress over some area that has not been yielded to God?

Question: What in your life do you need to surrender? You must *make peace with God* before you can have *the peace of God*. You can go a long way toward accomplishing that peace by praying: *thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

Prayer:

Father, I have no doubt that there are many people here today who are stressed out from resentment and worry and the need to control things. I'm sure there are many who are struggling with this issue of complete surrender to You. They've held onto something for so long they don't know how to let it go. Help them to realize how much You love them so that they can relax.