

Greg Gillham: 2/18/21
On Earth as it is in Heaven

The past couple of years, I've been thinking a lot about what Jesus meant when he prayed what we commonly call "The Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6:9-13. I have especially been considering that first part in verses 9-10,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

I've heard preachers and teachers remind me that Jesus takes time at the beginning of this prayer to confess God's identity: "our Father" which is intimate, who is "in heaven" which is distant. Jesus shows that the God who made everything is also accessible as our Dad.

Amazing!

I've also learned that the next part "hallowed be your name" is really meant to be parallel with "your kingdom come, your will be done." It doesn't work well in English, but it's supposed to be something like "your name holied, your kingdom come, your will be done." That means, then, that Jesus asks God to make all three things happen "on earth as it is in heaven."

What would it be like on earth if God's name was as holy as in heaven, where He is the holiest? What would it be like on earth if God's kingdom was as real and good as it is in the place where there is no other authority? What would it be like on earth if God's perfect will had no opposition? These are the questions that Jesus is incredibly inviting his disciples to ask!

Even further, I am amazed when I consider that Jesus -- who is God Himself -- is teaching the disciples of God's Kingdom to pray to God the Father with these words. Why does He need to tell us what to tell Himself? Well, first of all, we know from Luke 11 that they asked Him to teach them how to pray. But I think there's more. I think there's an element of this teaching-prayer in which Jesus is inviting His disciples to *participate* in the prayer. In other words, He is inviting them to help establish His Kingdom.

And that brings me to Missions Month! Jesus's disciples get to advance the borders of God's Kingdom. They get to imagine what situations would look like if He was really acknowledged as King, and then help make them real. How would people be treated with dignity? How would

people's needs be met? How would people's lives be changed forever if they submitted to a good, holy, loving King? That is our Message, and that is our missionaries' message.

So I pray that we submit again to Jesus today. I pray that we will use His teaching, especially in Matthew 5-7, to imagine what it would look like to follow Him today. I pray that we will be willing to learn from Him today. And I pray that we will make ourselves available to join Jesus in His work of sharing His Message today.