

**Matthew 6:10**  
**Power and Authority in the Kingdom of God**  
Sunday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

In the past I have preached on the Lord's Prayer and I have received back some tremendous input on the power this prayer had on people's spiritual lives.

Last week I challenged everyone to spend 10 minutes a day sitting in the presence of God, sitting in God's lap (called contemplative prayer).



I believe the church gathered in daily prayer is the source of enormous strength and power as God inspires us to pick up his authority through our identity as his children.



We as God's children represent the family! Our actions bring a good report about God's family or ill. If you have ever heard your parents say as you went out the door, "Make us proud!" That is what it means to represent God's family.



One woman told me the following story. She said she was very challenged to spend any part of her day in listening prayer. The praying the Lord's Prayer part was fine, but the sitting in silence and praying for 10 minutes a day was an enormous challenge. She said she lives on a busy street, which is very noisy, and she is a very active person; so 10 minutes of just sitting in prayer to her was like an eternity.

But she felt God calling her to do it and even more so after she went to her doctor. She was suffering from an eye problem and went to the Dr. about it. He examined her and said there were 2 ways to deal with this problem. One was rather painful and included scraping the inside of her eyelid with a scalpel.

The other consisted of placing warm compresses on her closed eyes every day for, you guessed it, 10 minutes. Guess which she picked?! She said, “Yes, God has his ways.”

Another woman told me, “Pastor Fred I just can’t get the Lord’s Prayer out of my mind. I wake up now in the middle of the night and when I wake up I am praying the Lord’s Prayer.” That prayer has become part of her.

Another woman told me about her attempts to invite a couple to worship to hear this series on prayer. They turned her down for the moment, but the seed was planted. Her heart is right with God in going into the world to invite, and I encouraged her by telling her Jesus sent us to fish. We are being faithful when we fish. When and if people respond; that is the Holy Spirit’s business. We are faithful in the invitation. (That’s why it’s called fishing for men, not catching men.)

Matthew 28:18 says, *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,*

As the paragraph and Greek is structured here, Jesus isn’t simply giving his disciples a command to “go”; a new law to follow. Jesus is giving his disciples the power and authority that he has..... to go and make disciples.



The very power of the Son of God is being transferred from God to Jesus to us to make disciples for him. This is why this section of

scripture is titled “The Great Commission” and not “The Great Command”. Jesus is not ordering or commanding us to go and make disciples. He is giving us the same authority and power he has received from The King our Father God to make disciples. Think about it we have the same authority and power that Jesus has to make disciples!

We in fact are to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth by making disciples, followers of Jesus Christ. We are to baptize, teach and model Kingdom living for all to see. This is reflected in the mission statement of the United Methodist Church to *“Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”*

A disciple is simply a person who seeks to model his/her life after the life and teachings of Jesus. We try to become the person that Jesus would be if he were we. One of the best ways to do that is the simple invitation to join you as you serve others or the church. Our missions are great areas of possibility.

We have the authority because it comes to us in our identity as children of the King, who is our Father, who is our God. The power comes to us in that Jesus Christ goes with us and before us wherever we go in this world through the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised us *he will be with us always to the end of the age.*

We bring but a taste of the Kingdom of God at our best like we do in Holy Communion, but we still bring a taste. You are probably wondering by now what does all of this have to do with the Lord’s Prayer? Well for us to pray the phrase, *“Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* is for us to ask God to make us actively part of bringing his Kingdom to earth. It is petition prayer. Remember I said that the Lord’s Prayer has 4 types of prayer in it: Contemplative, petition, intercessory and spiritual warfare prayer? This 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase is petition. We are asking to help bring God’s Kingdom to earth!!!

It works like this. You are praying the prayer,

“Let your name be held holy.  
Let your Kingdom come.  
Let your will be done.”

As you pray “Let your kingdom come,” you get “stuck”. You can’t continue on for to your mind comes the image of someone you just know you have to invite to church. Remember the Lord’s Prayer is a framework or an outline? So you come back to them and think about them.

Then you start to pray once more, “Let your will be done.” And you get stuck again thinking about your friend. You think God has led me to invite them. What can I invite them too? When can I invite them? What if they say no? But you know to be true to your prayer you must set a time and a place to invite; so right there and then you begin your planning. You won’t be able to finish that prayer that day until the time, place, method and event is settled in your mind to invite them.

In terms of the Lord’s Prayer, as quiet and reflective and contemplative as the first phrase is this 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase is not. It is a call to make our lives “*a holy and living sacrifice*” to the Lord as the words of our Holy Communion ritual state. It is a petition to God to help us make our lives living active prayers to God.

There was a man named Brother Lawrence. He wrote a short 39 page book called “The Practice of the Presence of God.”



It has had a profound impact on the Christian faith since it was written in the 1600s. You can find it for free on the internet. It is from a man who found times of quiet contemplation no more helpful than the times of active service for God. He spent most of his time as a cook and dishwasher in the monastery where he lived. His most famous poem captured the essence of his active spirituality of making his life a living prayer.

*Lord of all pots and pans and things,  
Since I've no time to be a great saint  
By doing lovely things,  
Or watching late with Thee,  
Or dreaming in the dawnlight,  
Or storming heaven's gates,  
Make me a saint by getting meals,  
And washing up the plates.  
Warm all the kitchen with Thy Love,  
And light it with Thy peace;  
Forgive me all my worrying,  
And make my grumbling cease.  
Thou who didst love to give men food,  
In room, or by the sea,  
Accept the service that I do,  
I do it unto Thee.*

A youth worker wrote the following:



*A few months ago I was in the kitchen for what felt like hours after youth group cleaning up leftovers and washing the never ending pile of dishes when I realized this is ministry. This is the kingdom living at its finest. I was on the verge of complaining and being aggravated with the kids that had just left me to clean up their mess.*

*Most of them mad at me because I wouldn't give them a second cookie!*

*I started washing the pots and pans, and the Lord convicted me that I could be using this time to pray for these students instead of being frustrated with them. I quickly remembered a book that has changed my life, "Practicing the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence.*

*The one huge thing I remember about Brother Lawrence is that he wanted to be a monk but they made him wash dishes instead. Can you imagine having a call to be a monk and they send you to the kitchen? But it was through the kitchen he became a monk. He spent his days washing dishes and mediating and praying while doing so.*

*On that day I began praying and begging God for these students' lives while washing all their dishes.*

*So now a few months later, you know what? I'm in charge of cleaning the kitchen everyday. When all the kids have left the after school program, I'm cleaning and praying.*

*The kitchen at Trinity Christian Community has become a sacred place for me. Today I was washing the stack of 40 plates from snack (we are trying to be green and not use disposable!) and I was overwhelmed with the joy for these precious lives that we have the privilege of ministering to everyday.....*

*When we find our joy in the Lord, the most ordinary things become fulfilling and joyous.*

*Wash someone's dish today with the joy of the Lord!*

In an Upper Room devotional on this very scripture a mother wrote this,



*"When I looked into the beautiful, innocent eyes of the child in front of me, I realized that I was part of the world she was experiencing. It was in my hands to express for her what our world was like—the world she had been born into.*

*I vowed to grant her glimpses of heaven because heaven is what I wish for her. When she looks at me, I want her to feel joy, peace, and love. And I want this not just for her but for all people. In many ways we can*

*offer glimpses of heaven on earth for people around us.*” Remember the Lord’s Prayer is in the plural!! Another way of saying to make disciples is to offer glimpses of heaven through our very lives.

Now I want to point out something before we move on. The entire Lord’s Prayer is connected with one part often explaining or expanding on another. When we take seriously Jesus’ Commission to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth in word and in deed we will run into *hard testing, which is another way of translating “temptation.”* When we try to bring the Kingdom to earth we will be tempted to give up, give in, remain silent, not pray, not invite and grumble and complain. And back to the example of inviting someone, we will also get stuck here “Lead us not into the temptation of inaction” until we act!

When we get to that point, or in those situations, we must pray again and again *“lead us not into hard testing, or lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* Until either our circumstances change, or our attitude towards our circumstances changes. And remember we are to bring, to the best of our abilities, the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The Kingdom of God is a future reality as well as a present one. Wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Kingdom of God. Wherever you are as baptized believers, Jesus is there with you for remember he promised to always be with us to the end of the age. We see this in his first sermon that was only one sentence long and summarizes His message.

It is *Mark 1:14, “The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.”* Wherever Jesus is there is the Kingdom of God or Heaven. Wherever you are in Jesus’ name and whatever good you are doing there is the Kingdom of God.

When we go and do the will of God the future Kingdom of God (Heaven) becomes present now through the authority of Jesus Christ and the power of his presence with us, which is the Holy Spirit.

So today, Jesus invites you to **come follow him** and be his disciple. Christ challenges you to **go into the world** and bring the Kingdom of God with you, so that through your life people can see glimpses of the Kingdom of God, of heaven.

So come to the table of the Lord in a moment to be cleansed of your sin, reminded of the authority and power God has given you, and then go into the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Spend a moment now in prayer seeking God's will for your life as you pray for yourself, and your church, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

What is God saying to you and what are you going to do about it?

PRAYER

In Jesus' name amen.