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This week at MRC we continued our series in the Lord's Prayer focusing in on the 3 'your' statements in v9 and 10.

We noted that this prayer is extraordinary because Jesus is teaching people that foundationally they are not at the centre of the universe. As we begin to pray we are to start not by jumping straight to our (often good) needs and wants, but rather re-orientating our self on him. The prayer does not jump straight into daily bread, but begins by re-focusing on God. This is not natural but vital - it changes our view of what life is about. Pray as we study this prayer that We would be mastered by it, rather than being those who master it.

We also thought again about the fact that this is both a very simple yet complex prayer. At one level very easy to understand - at another very complex and nuanced.

The God we revere ~Hallowed be your name

The start of the prayer overshadows the rest of it as our initial step is to focus afresh on how extraordinary and powerful God is. His name is more than simply what he is called, but rather who he is - his character and priorities, his actions in history. To say his name is hallowed is to say that it is holy, set apart, revered, awesome. It reminds us who he is, but also in contrast what we're like. It's a prayer that more than simply tells God what he is like, but implicitly longs that his name would be increasingly honoured in his world.

We thought a bit about the common idea that God is a needy ego-maniac longing for our worship as we revere him. Listen to the talk for the brief start to a response, but we noted 1. That God does not need our worship and 2. We were made to worship. As we worship him, so we get to treasure him and receive him.

Very practically the idea of God's name being revered will have implications in our own daily lives and spheres of influence.

The God who rules ~Your kingdom come

In a cynical world that questions the idea of authority and power we initially noted that the kingdom in Matthew begins with transformed counter-cultural inner selves (see the summer Beatitudes) which then spreads to the lives of others. The kingdom grows in quantity and size often after its growth in quality from changed lives. We do not need to be anxious about praying for God's kingdom to come...

The God who reigns ~Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven

We noted again that God's will, scripturally, is a more complicated idea than we sometimes realize. We distinguished between his **will of command** (do not murder etc) and his **will of decree** (or sovereign will) that says he is 'in charge' of all that happens (and yet able to use evil and sin for his glory but finally it is never attributable to him). To pray 'your will be done' here is to pray for both.

That prayer, as with Jesus in Gethsemane, may be a huge challenge as it may mean the prayer of suffering that leads to fruit and God's glory. It's a prayer that submits us personally and corporately to the will of God in all areas of life.

We ended by thinking about Eric Liddell, the Olympic Runner who became a missionary to China. His motto was 'absolute surrender'. 2 words that capture much of the focus in these 3 phrases that re-submit us to the will of our Father in Heaven.

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As always feel free to tweak questions as appropriate for your group

How does it change our praying to pray to God as 'our Father in Heaven'? Has this changed how you pray this last week? Why or why not?

How easily do you find it to pray? When you do pray do you find it easy to start off by praying for the 3 'your' statements in v9 and 10?

What does Jesus mean when he talks about God's name? What does it mean that his name is hallowed? Why do you think Jesus starts his prayer like this?

What have we learnt so far from Matthew about God's kingdom? In light of that what does it mean to pray for his Kingdom to come? What might that look like in your week? What is the outworking of lives transformed by the kingdom (see 5:16 for example).

What does it mean that God's will is done? What would you say to someone who says that God is sovereign so his will is already always done?! Have a look at 26:39 - how does Jesus pray this kind of a prayer? What might this prayer then look like for us? Do you want to pray this sort of a prayer? Be honest.