

**Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.** A few words in a well-known prayer, repeated millions of times each day all over the world. But a few words with more meaning and more packed behind them than one might imagine.

Taking a step back, let's remember why we thought that God's name should be Hallowed. In essence, we said that we want God's name to be special. We can take that one step deeper and think about why. It's not just his name but who He is that is at the core of our call to honour his name. God is the creator, the judge and the Saviour. He is the Creator of all the universe. He holds our circumstances, our life, and our future in his hands; and as such we are answerable to him. He has warned us that he will hold us to account for our thoughts and actions. But he cares so dearly for each one of us that he is also our Redeemer, and paid the awful price for our rescue as well.

**Thy Kingdom come** is an acknowledgement of God's reign over the universe which has not yet been fully realised. Where is God's Kingdom to be found? The first answer that trips off our tongues is why, in heaven of course. But God's Kingdom can be found here on earth too. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is among you". What exactly did he mean? Jesus is the gateway, the door to the Kingdom of God. He is the source of our forgiveness. As people come to know Jesus Christ, and honour him, so we find God's Kingdom there. Think of our reading about Zaccheus, who by mending his wicked ways came to know God's salvation and become a part of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is also in groups of Christian meeting to honour his name and work together as brothers and sisters to His glory. God's Kingdom is across nations and across the world, no matter the colour, creed or language. But the Kingdom of Heaven will truly be known in every corner of the earth when Jesus comes again, and then every knee will bow to him. In this simple phrase, we are inspired by the Lord to ask of ourselves: What would the Lord have me do for his Kingdom? What gifts has he given me to help to build and strengthen his Kingdom around me, in my country and across the world? What is my part to play? This phrase speaks to the whole purpose of our life!

But wait! There's more! **Thy will be done.** Psalm 99 says that God is a 'lover of justice' who 'has established equity'. This helps us to understand some of the will, values and priorities of God. Through the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and indeed throughout the teachings of Jesus, we are given guidance and instruction of how to live according to these values and priorities, with justice and equity. **Thy will be done** can be seen as the desire for God's children to live according to these rules in all they do, and in actively living according to God's will, build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. There is also a passive perspective to the words **Thy will be done.** It highlights a complete loyalty and submission to the will of God. We can see it in the Old Testament, where the friends of Daniel refused to worship idols of the king Nebuchadnezzar. Their response to him was 'Our God is able to deliver us from the furnace and we believe he will, but if not, let it be known to you, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image'. It showed a deeply courageous and terrifying submission to the will of God. Jesus, too, showed the same submission in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest, when he prayed to the Lord, 'Father if this cup can pass, let it pass, but if not, may your will be done.' We all too have had times in our lives when we have prayed to the Lord but have had to be prepared that our prayers would not be answered as we wished them to be, and the outcome, however hard to bare, is the will of God.

But there is a ray of sunshine and hope beyond, and that is heaven. The more we honour the name of Father and son, and strive to live according to his will on earth in the same way his will is done in Heaven – perfectly, willingly and with joy – the closer we come to the Kingdom of Heaven, like a garden inviting us through the open door that is Jesus Christ. It is a disturbing fact that in God's presence, there will be nothing ungodly, unholy or impure and not one of us has an automatic ticket into heaven. But God has great mercy and grace, which is at the heart of Christianity. Through the sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven, and it is possible for us to be made perfect and acceptable to him. As we let the Holy Spirit into our lives and work on us, bringing us into the Kingdom, and enabling us to live for God, we are changed little by little into Christ-like people.