

THE KING'S FATHER
MATTHEW 6:9-15

King George VI ruled as king of England for about 15 years in the first half of the 20th century before he died in 1952 from coronary thrombosis. He was immensely popular, as was his wife, Queen Elizabeth. Yet as popular as she was, when George (“Bertie”) died, she took a back seat while her daughter, also Elizabeth, became the ruling monarch, taking the title Queen of England. And the woman who had been Queen became simply “the Queen Mother.”



The Queen’s mother seemed to be quite a nice lady (she died at age 100 in 2002) — but when her husband was king and later when her daughter was queen, she had no official power. I’m sure she had ability to persuade both her husband and daughter at times, and it would have been fun to be able to say, “I met the queen’s mother.” But while she carried [many different titles](#) (e.g., Commandant-in-Chief of the Army and Air Force Women's Services, President of the British Red Cross Society, and Commandant-in-Chief of the Nursing Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, among many others), she had no “queenly” power.

In the passage we want to examine this morning, King Jesus introduces us to His Father; but please do not assume that His Father’s position in His monarchy is anything at all like the British monarchy. They are not alike; the Father of King Jesus is not a powerless figurehead.

As we come to this passage, it will be helpful to think about the regency of Jesus and how He relates to His Father. We saw last week that Matthew makes that case that Jesus is King — the anointed Messiah that will fulfill the promise made to David (2 Sam. 7:16; **Mt. 1:1**; 4:17; **19:28**; 28:18).

We also need to acknowledge that the OT regularly talks about the Kingdom of God — there are more than 3000 references to king, kingdom, reign, and throne (Ex. 19:6; **Ps. 22:28**; **45:6**; **145:11-13**) — and the great sin of Israel is that she rejected God as her king (**1 Sam. 8:7**). The OT references to the Kingship of God overwhelmingly are about the Father’s Kingship. So how can Father and Son both be King? There is such a thing as a co-regency, but it is even slightly different than that.

The OT pictures God as the eternal King of a universal kingdom, which He gives evidence of as far back as Genesis 1 — His sovereign creation demonstrates His rulership and right and ability to rule. So MacArthur says, “From before the beginning until after the end, from the beginning to the end, both in and beyond time and space, God appears as the ultimate King. God is central to and the core of all things eternal and temporal.” [*Biblical Doctrine*, 44.]

While the first person of the Trinity serves as universal King, He also establishes a mediatorial (mediated) kingdom on earth on which men will rule. The first “ruler” was Adam and he quickly went astray from God’s kingdom principles, as did every other subsequent ruler. When a formal kingdom was established for Israel (and then Judah), the rulers again repeatedly failed. But there is a coming King who will reign in that mediatorial Kingdom who will not fail — the Messiah Jesus (who was promised in **2 Sam. 7:16**). He came in His first advent offering and presenting His Kingdom (**Mt. 4:17**); it was rejected (**12:24**), but He will be installed as King of that Kingdom one day (soon?! **Mt. 25:31**).

And that Millennial reign of Jesus will transition into God’s eternal Kingdom (Rev. 21-22) where Father and Son will jointly sit on the throne ruling their people (**Rev. 22:1, 3** — one throne, two co-eternal regents).

So as we look at our Savior, we must have in mind that He is authoritative King and Sovereign. And He has a Father that has the same nature and qualities as Him, with the same authority; He is not only the King’s Father, but He is also the eternal King of the eternal Kingdom.

The goal this morning is to introduce you to the King’s Father. And I want to take you to a passage that is exceedingly familiar to you (even most unbelievers know this passage) so that you will see the King’s Father in a new manner. In Matthew 6, Jesus introduces us to His Father this way:

OUR KING’S FATHER IS BOTH TRANSCENDENT AND PERSONAL.

King Jesus reveals **six characteristics** of His Father, the eternal King:

1. Our King’s Father is **OUR** Father (v. 9a)
2. Our King’s Father is Our **HOLY ONE** (v. 9b)
3. Our King’s Father is Our **SOVEREIGN** (v. 10)
4. Our King’s Father is Our **PROVIDER** (v. 11)
5. Our King’s Father is Our **FORGIVER** (v. 12, 14-15)
6. Our King’s Father is Our **PROTECTOR** (v. 13)

These characteristics not only reveal to us what the eternal King of Heaven is like, but these qualities also demonstrate the work of God on our behalf — what the King’s Father does for His subjects.

1. Our King's Father is OUR Father (v. 9a)

- When Jesus commanded His followers to begin prayers with **our Father**, He was inaugurating a new and radical understanding of God.
 - ✓ The primary way God is known in the OT is as YHWH. He is the great I am. He has always existed and will always exist. He is holy (Ex. 3:5) and “unapproachable” (Ex. 33:20). And the Israelites were so fearful of speaking the name of God in vain (Ex. 20:7) that they refused to speak this name of His. And now Jesus calls Him **Father**. How brash and overly familiar that must have sounded to the Jews.
 - ✓ Additionally, in the OT, there are less than ten references to God as Father; but in the Gospels Jesus refers to God more than 70 times as His Father.
 - ✓ And here Jesus affirms the reality that not only is God *His* Father, but that He is also the Father of all those who belong to Him. Jesus reiterates this same truth to Mary (Jn. 20:17).
- When you pray, you have access to the infinite, holy, omnipotent, wise King of all things. *And* when you pray (if you are a believer in Christ), you have access to Him as *Father*.
 - ✓ This points to family relationship — we have been adopted into the family of God (Gal. 4:1-7). Note that this is not true for all people. God is not the Father of all people; you must be first made a son through faith; Gal. 3:26. And if you reject Christ God is not your Father.
 - ✓ What are the implications of being adopted into the family of the great King? The primary facet of our relationship with God as Father is that we are loved and wanted.
 - Because He is our Father, God desires our fellowship and always welcomes us (7:7-10).
 - He is always compassionate towards our needs. I would always welcome my children into my office or jump on me while I was taking a nap or call me in the middle of the night or use my tools or eat the groceries in my fridge. I never gave them stones instead of bread. And yet there is no comparison between my love and God's love for our children (7:11).
 - ... Our Father/King is always compassionate towards our needs. He is compassionate toward our troubles (2 Thess. 2:16-17) and toward our sin (Lk. 15:11ff).
 - ... Our Father/King is capable of meeting our needs because He is not only the Father, but He is the Father **in Heaven**. That doesn't just refer to His zip code — it reminds us that He is “above this mess on earth.” He is also not just in Heaven, but in Heaven as Master (King!) over all things with all the resources of Heaven to care for us. This is His exalted position.
 - ... Our Father/King is no longer our enemy but our Father; we have no need to fear Him. He is not angry with us since Christ absorbed His righteous anger on the cross.
 - ... Because of our unique relationship with Our Father/King, we can boldly ask from Him (Heb. 4:16) and know that He will give us His best (Mt. 7:11). *Whatever* God gives me will always be the best for me.

- ... Our Father/King will never leave us alone (Ps. 68:5-6).
- ... Our Father/King will teach us (Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:14)
- ... Our Father/King will not allow Satan to defeat us (Rom. 16:20)
- ... Our Father/King will never disinherit us (Rom. 8:28-30)

- The King of Eternity is the Father to whom we have bold access:

"We come now, knowing full well that we shall be met with compassion and kindness, understanding and affection. This reassures our hearts. It sets our minds at ease. It frees our spirits and releases us into a deep delight in our dealings with our heavenly Father. How good to know, here is someone who really understands; who knows all about us and who, even though He knows the worst, still loves us. This explains why we can come to Him in any situation and find a warm welcome." [Phillip Keller, p. 19.]

2. Our King's Father is Our **HOLY ONE** (v. 9b)

- After addressing the King as Father, the first request made is for His name to be **hallowed**. The word means "to sanctify, to set apart." It is generally used of believers (Jn. 17:17; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 5:26). But God is also uniquely holy and sanctified — set apart.
- Christ's instruction for our praying demonstrates that we are particularly to recognize His holiness.
- Now when we pray this, we are not asking, "God, we want You to become holy..." He *is* eternally and infinitely holy and He cannot be made more holy. So what is this prayer?
 - ✓ God's holiness "is a fundamental statement of who God is and what He is like. Holiness in God is everything that sets him apart from the sinful creation, and it is everything that elevates Him above moral splendor." [Wells, *God in the Whirlwind*.] It is absence of any evil and presence of full purity.
 - ✓ So this request is to esteem and honor Him for what He is — this was Jesus' example (Jn. 17:4a, 6a). Calvin said that to hallow God's name is to desire that God has the honor that is due Him — that men should never think or speak of Him without greatest veneration.
- This prayer means the King is our Father, but He is also holy and He is to be addressed in that way. We have access to the King because He is our Father and we can make requests with boldness because Christ (His eternal Son) is also our great High Priest; but we also come with humility, honoring and seeking the honor and glory of God in all His fulness.
 - ✓ We do not approach Him flippantly but with dignity and honor fitting of His infinite holiness.
 - ✓ We also approach Him confidently, knowing He can only do what is right for us (Ps. 119:68).
 - ✓ We also approach Him understanding that because He is holy He is able to impute His Son's righteousness to us so that we also can be called "holy" (2 Cor. 5:21). Our holiness is from Him.

3. Our King's Father is Our **SOVEREIGN** (v. 10)

- When Jesus says that we should pray for the King's **kingdom [to] come** He is anticipating the end of the ages when Christ will rule on David's throne as was promised (2 Sam 7:16). This is the same thing as John says at the end of Revelation — "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).
 - ✓ To desire God's Kingdom is to desire God's final judgment on sin and sinners and to be finally freed from the sin that entangles us. (We are too preoccupied with our circumstances today and do not think or desire enough the Lord's final working out of His plan.)
 - ✓ But there is also a sense in which we want God's Kingdom now —
 - we want the Lord to demonstrate His sovereignty by bringing people to salvation.
 - we want those who are believers to live sanctified lives under the lordship of Christ. We want Christ to be honored as King both now and in His future kingdom.
 - ✓ God is a sovereign King who will reign at the end of time *and* He is a sovereign King who reigns now. There is nothing in this world that doesn't belong to Him and over which He does not have authority. There are no renegade husbands/wives, politicians, or molecules. Nothing exists over which He cannot say, "Mine." [Kuyper] And if it is His, allegiance belongs to Him.
- This request for the coming kingdom of Christ is also part of the request for God's **will [to] be done**.
- When we think about God's sovereignty (**will**), we recognize two kinds of sovereignty (**will**):
 - ✓ He has a *decreed* will — that's His sovereignty over history. That sovereignty is always perfectly accomplished (and is usually hidden from us; Dt. 29:29a; Rom. 1:10; Eph. 1:1; 1 Pt. 4:19). This request is not primarily referring to that.
 - ✓ He also has a *preceptive* will (His precepts and commands). While this will is revealed (Dt. 29:29b; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; Eph. 6:6), this will is not always accomplished because it is dependent on obedience. This request is asking for the revealed will in God's Word to be obeyed.
 - ✓ God's revealed will is fully obeyed in Heaven; this is a request that heavenly obedience would even now be an earthly reality (e.g., 2 Cor. 5:9; Js. 1:22).
- Amy Carmichael articulated this request this way: "And shall I pray to change Thy will, my Father, until it accord to mine? But no, Lord, no. That shall never be. Rather I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine." [MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7*] **Thy will be done** recognizes the King has a right to demand allegiance.
 - ✓ So to seek the coming of Christ's Kingdom and to have God's will be done on earth means, "Because I know you are King, I want to submit to Your will and be obedient to You."
 - ✓ To come to the Father who is sovereign King is *not* to say, "Dad, I need the car this weekend; give it to me." It is to come to the sovereign (powerful and right) King who is also Father and say, "Because You are King, you are *the* authority over me and I want to do what you want me to do..."
 - ✓ E.g., Jesus' parable of two sons (21:28-32); the second is the one who sees the King's Father as sovereign.

4. Our King's Father is Our PROVIDER (v. 11)

- **Give us this day our daily bread** is reminiscent of God's provision of manna for the Israelites
 - ✓ Ex. 16:13-21 — God provided exactly what they needed to be sustained for one day
 - ✓ Dt. 8:2-3, 16-20 — God's purpose each day was not only to feed them but to test their hearts
 - ✓ The question for the Israelites was whether they would trust God; the question for us is whether we will trust Him. More important than eating a meal is, "Do I trust the King?" (My discontentment or anger or anxiousness all reveal that I either don't trust God's ability or His goodness).
- When Jesus says to pray for our **daily bread** He reminds us that we are dependent on the King for all.
 - ✓ This is a reminder that even if we have profitable job and money in the bank that we are still dependent on Him for everything we need every day. *He* is self-sufficient; we are not.
 - ✓ This request also is a reminder to pray for today's need. The words **this day** implies, "I have a need today and I am dependent on You to provide it — would you graciously give it?" In a culture where most workers were paid daily for their labors, missing even one day of work could be catastrophic; this is a reminder to pray for our daily mundane needs.
 - ✓ This request is also not a selfish prayer — it is for **us...our** (plural). It is to pray for my needs so I might bless others and it is to pray for others needs along with my own. This is going to the King on behalf of others for their needs and not just ourselves.
 - ✓ What is remarkable about this is that all earthly kings seek provision from their people through taxation (and that is appropriate, Rom. 13). But the eternal King doesn't seek provision; He gives provision. He loves to care for His subjects. You can go to the King's treasury and ask for help.
 - ✓ What do you need? Ask the King. (Cf. Js. 4:2b — "You do not have because you do not ask.")

"Here is a great discovery. We do not glorify God by providing His needs, but by praying that He would provide ours — and trusting Him to answer." [Piper, Desiring God, 134.]

5. Our King's Father is Our FORGIVER (v. 12, 14-15)

- Notice the **and** at the beginning of verse 12 — Jesus is connecting the thoughts in verses 11, 12. It's not enough to pray just for food; the greatest need we have is not for daily food but daily pardon. When we go to God for our basic physical needs, that should prompt us to pray for our most basic spiritual need — forgiveness. (Forgiveness is our greatest need because sin is our greatest problem.)
- When we talk about God's forgiveness, there are two kinds of **forgiveness** (dismissal, remission):
 - ✓ **Judicial** forgiveness: This is the forgiveness that provides salvation, the wiping away of our debt of sin for all eternity (e.g., Acts 8:22; 10:43; Rom. 4:7; 1 Jn. 2:12). This is the legal act of the King.

- ✓ *Paternal* or familial forgiveness: the forgiveness that restores fellowship between Father and sons (1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 66:18). This is the loving act of the King who is our Father — and the forgiveness that Jesus is speaking of here.
- ✓ Our great confidence is that as much we confess our sins, the Father/King will forgive our sins.
- And because we are forgiven, we also forgive the sins of others: **as we have forgiven others** (14-15).
 - ✓ This phrase does not mean that we forgive others to get forgiveness from God.
 - ✓ We forgive others *because* we have been forgiven by God (Mt. 18:21-35). It is incongruous to have God's forgiveness and not extend forgiveness to others.
 - ✓ Augustine called verses 14-15 "the terrible petition" because if we don't forgive others, we are really asking God not to forgive us. It means that we want the same kind of forgiveness from God that we have granted to others.
- The temptation with these verses is to spend most of the time discussing how to forgive others, but that's not Jesus' point — what we are to pray is for **our forgiveness**. We should always be quick to confess our sin to the Lord and seek restoration of fellowship to Him.
- It's a humbling thing to make a request of someone who has great authority (boss/owner; parent; civil/political official). It is a *terrifying* thing to ask someone who has great authority for forgiveness for something we have done against them (think about a court room). How much more for *the King*. Yet we will never find Him to be resistant to responding to us. He is ever ready to forgive (Lk. 23:34).

"We are never more aware of God's grace than when we admit our sin and cry out for pardon. We are never more like God than when, for Christ's sake, we extend forgiveness fully and freely to those who have sinned against us." [Haddon Robinson]

6. Our King's Father is Our **PROTECTOR** (v. 13)

- The final component of Christ's prayer is related to the previous — but instead of asking for forgiveness for sin after the fact, it asks for protection from sin before it is indulged.
- Do not **lead us into temptation** does not mean that God entices us to sin (Js. 1:13-14).
 - ✓ Jesus is using a negative figure of speech to express a positive request. E.g., Jn. 6:37, "I will not cast out" means "I will keep!" So here, **do not lead...** means "keep me away from..." Or, "Lead me away from temptation..."
 - ✓ And the parallel, **deliver me from evil** means "rescue me from evil" (e.g., Rom. 7:24-25).
 - ✓ In fact **evil** is actually **the evil** and may be a reference to Satan, the author of evil.
 - ✓ So the request is, "Keep us from wandering into paths where we will be tempted by the devil, but if he comes, keep us out of his clutches."

- ✓ And here is the joy of our salvation; because we have been freed from sin, we have also been freed from the power of sin so that we no longer are compelled to sin; we can do righteousness and please the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:13). This request asks God to do that very thing in us.
- ✓ But again recognize that this request is being made of *the King*. The eternal, sovereign, King of creation, history, Heaven, earth, and redemption serves as our “guide,” “scout,” “protector.”
- ✓ This is no newly revealed role of God — He has always been the place of refuge and protection: Num. 14:9; Ruth 2:12; 2 Sam. 22:3, 31; Pss. 5:11-12; 7:1; 11:1; 18:2, 30; 34:22; 61:4; 62:7-8...
- One great implication of this verse: even though you are a believer in Christ, you can still sin (and you still will sin). This prayer is an honest admission to the King, “I’m weak. Please help me!” Scripture is filled with accounts of those who failed to acknowledge their weaknesses, with painful results: Cain, Abraham, Lot, Moses, Achan, Saul, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Gomer, Judas, Hymenaeus and Alexander... Be aware that you can and will sin (and can still ask for the help of the King).

CONCLUSION: In 1952, King George the VI died and was succeeded on the British throne by Queen Elizabeth — his daughter, not his wife. On the day of coronation approximately 1-1/2 years later (6/2/53), she put on the historic Coronation Crown — the crown worn by all British monarchs at their coronation since 1661. The five-pound crown is worth some \$4.5 million — and has been worn once by Elizabeth, on her coronation day. You and I might be able to see it on display with the other crown jewels, but we have no accessibility to that crown, nor the woman who wore it, nor her mother.



We have a great and gracious King, Jesus. Both He and His Father have a regal power that infinitely transcends the power of Elizabeth, her mother, or any regal on earth. They are transcendent in their power, sovereignty, and authority. And they are humble, personal, and accessible in their care of us and provision for us. The King and His Father “continually wear the regal crown of authority” and also serve with graciousness the people who belong to them. The King and His Father are sovereign and serving. Let us serve and submit to their sovereignty, and rest in His kingly care of us.

BENEDICTION: Ephesians 3:20-21