

Pastor Don Nelson

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**“YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH”**  
Matthew 6:10

 A few small words can have an impact all out of proportion to their size.

During our engagement Beth was a teacher in Muscatine, IA, west of the Quad Cities. I was in my last year of seminary at North Park, on the North Side.

Other than the tourist spots, Beth had never been anywhere in Chicago and she was not used to city driving. So when we set up her first visit we planned to rendezvous at the O’Hare Oasis on the Tri-State. After we met up, Beth would simply follow me in to the neighborhood. (She also had written directions, in case we became separated.)

I made it on time; but where was my fiancée? Fifteen minutes later I felt uneasy; ½ hour later I was alarmed; 45 minutes later I was sweating bullets. Was she lying in a ditch somewhere, the victim of a tragic accident? (This was 1993. We didn’t have cell phones.)

Beth was just as anxious. She was on time; but where was I?

I was in the building. Meanwhile, Beth was with her car in the lot. I went out a few times, hoping she might be there – but the place was packed, there was a lot of in-and-out traffic, and it was dark, so I didn’t see her.

Our plan was meticulous. It was very thorough. All that was missing were five little words: “Let’s meet inside the oasis.”

A few small words can have an impact disproportionate to their size.

Please keep that in mind as we enter Matthew 6:10b: **“your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”**

 1<sup>st</sup>, Let’s put this in context: **“your will be done” explains “your kingdom come.”**

 You might remember that {ECC Catechism} **“The Kingdom of God is the reign of God expressed in the hearts and lives of his people both now and through eternity.”**

To **“reign”** is to rule with royal power and authority. For a subject to “express” their monarch’s reign is to submit to them with respect and obedience. Therefore, the kingdom of God is the place where God’s will is carried out. **“Your will be done”** is another way of saying, **“your kingdom come.”**

 2<sup>nd</sup>, **“on earth as it is in heaven”** reveals that the Kingdom, when it comes in its fullness, will be located on this planet.

I say “in its fullness” since, for the time being, God’s Kingdom is both now and not yet.”

➤ The kingdom of God is now. Jesus began his ministry by preaching: {Mk 1:15} **“The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near.”** He also announced, {Lk 17:21} **“the kingdom of God is in your midst.”** Jesus told one man, {Mk 12:34} **“You are not far from the kingdom.”** He promised his disciples: {Lk 9:27} **“Some who are standing here will not [die] before they see the kingdom of God.”**

➤ The kingdom of God is also not yet. At the Last Supper Jesus said: {Lk 22:16, 18} **“I will not eat [this] again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God,”** and **“I will not drink again of the [wine] until the kingdom of God comes.”** Elsewhere we read that this great feast will follow Christ’s Second Coming. Who could possibly think it has already happened?

➤ But when the time is right, {Rev 11:15} **“The kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever”** on this planet. The will of God will be done **“on earth as it is in heaven.”**

✎ But wait: doesn’t Scripture prophesy a new earth?

➤ In Second Peter 3:10 and 13 Peter declares:

**The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.... But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.**

➤ And in Revelation 21:1 John reports: **“I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”**

How, then, can I assert that the Kingdom will be on this planet? *Am I not at odds with the Bible?*

⊛ If I (or any preacher) appear to contradict the Word, ask questions, like: *What do other verses say? What has the faithful Church taught? What does this imply for essential doctrines, especially in regard to Christ’s identity*

and ministry? Holy God (and by extension his written Word) is the final authority!

Having said this, the most obvious interpretation is not always accurate. Such is the case here.

◆ The Greek New Testament includes three separate adjectives that are translated “new” in English. In our language they sound interchangeable, when in fact each has different set of nuances.

◆ Προσφατος (prosphatos) means “new” as in *fresh* (like, “fresh fruit”). It appears once in Scripture, in Hebrews 10:20.

◆ Νεος (neos) means *new in time*. The ancients applied it to infants, children, and social fads which did not exist before now. In Scripture it refers to the new reality of our present salvation.

◆ Καινος (kainos) is the adjective translated “**new**” in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and Revelation 21. It means *new (and often superior) in quality and nature*. It shares a root with the verbs *to renew, restore, make new*. It usually refers to something that is new without being novel.

➤ For example, speaking of the Law of Love, John declares: **“I am not writing you a new [καινος] command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new [καινος] command; its truth is seen in [Jesus] and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining”** (First John 2:7-8).

☑ New yet not new is not as outlandish as it sounds. Consider:

- A woman drops 150 pounds and what does she say? “I’m a new person!” And she is: she thinks, eats, drinks, dresses, and even relates to people in new ways. She also isn’t: her DNA, fingerprints, birthday, name, family, and core personality have not changed.
- You gut a fixer-upper, put in new floors, walls, windows, and appliances, and what do you say? “It’s a new house!” And it is: it looks, smells, sounds, and feels completely new. It also isn’t: the address, footprint, basic structure and history have not changed.

Likewise, the use of *καινός* in these texts suggests that the new earth will be *this* one, completely renewed.

◆ Not only so, what do we discover in Romans 8:19-22? **“The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be”** – what, destroyed? No! – **“liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”** This is not about the annihilation of the planet Earth; the apostle Paul is describing its total rehabilitation.

◆ Right now someone is probably thinking: So what? What difference does it make? That’s a good question, and it deserves a good answer.

🔔 The basic answer is that conceptual belief determines practical action. If you want to know what a person believes, don’t only listen to their words; also watch what they do.

◆ How does this play out with the doctrine of the Kingdom’s location?

In dozens of ways! But I will stick with one: the Church’s relationship with the world.

Christ Followers who believe the fulfilled Kingdom will be on the renewed Earth tend to cultivate redemptive relationships in the world.

Their ultimate future hope is for resurrection to new [*καινός*] life in a physical body like Christ’s (Romans 6:2-8). This informs their present hope, which is to foreshadow the renewal of the Earth by manifesting the kingdom here and now. They seek to be in the world but not of it.

In contrast, Christ Followers who believe the fulfilled Kingdom will be on a different Earth tend to withdraw from the world.

Their future hope is to escape the Earth before it is destroyed (either by being translated into eternity through personal death or Christ’s Second Coming) and live in heaven as purely spiritual beings. This shapes their present hope, which is to prepare for evacuation by avoiding worldly contamination. They try not to be of the world, by not being in it.

Each approach contains biblical truth. But I would argue that, on the whole, the first more closely

matches the examples and teachings set by the Lord Jesus and his apostles.

But someone who really knows the Bible might ask, what about First John 2:15? It says, **“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If you love the world, love for the Father is not in you.”**

In this passage, **“the world”** does not mean the planet or its human inhabitants (not even the worst ones)! After all, it is John who, inspired by God’s Holy Spirit, also preaches that **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son”** (John 3:16).

In First John 2:15 and similar verses **“the world”** means the forces of sin and death, and the corrupt religious, social, economic and political systems that serve sin and death by enslaving people. God calls us to love the people of the world by helping to liberate them from bondage to the world’s sinful systems (which we should hate).

We do this by manifesting his Kingdom until Christ’s Second Coming. That requires us to invest time, energy and love in relationships with neighbors who do not know Jesus.

All of this depends, in part, on what we believe about the location of God’s completed Kingdom! And brothers and sisters, the ground we have covered this morning is only the tip of the iceberg.

The few, small words of Matthew 6:10b have an impact all out of proportion to their size. Hear again the

Word of the LORD: **“your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”** Thanks be to God!