

Prayer (Part 3) – The Nations

Michael Oh – January 18, 2015

Good morning. It's wonderful to be with you all. Let me read from Matthew, chapter 6, verses 9-13, very familiar verses.

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"

As a kid, I had an evening ritual: going to bed and seeing the poster on my wall of the Lord's Prayer and sometimes praying it. I'd do my thing. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done...amen." Then I would just wait for blessing. I'd done my duty, my incantation to the divine, and now he owed me. "I'm definitely going to win my ice hockey game tomorrow." Just waiting for that college acceptance letter. The divine had been put on notice.

The Lord's Prayer is such a beautiful prayer, but it is so often just rambled through instead of understood and embraced and truly prayed and truly lived. As we ramble through the prayer, we miss out on the opportunity to understand not just prayer, but the Lord's teaching on the purpose of life. Let me ask you an important question...*What's the purpose of life? What's the purpose of your life?*

One way we can look at this question of what the purpose of life is and should be for every Christian is to see what Jesus taught us in how to pray. Jesus' foundational prayer reflects the foundational essential Christian life. Let me say this again. In Jesus' foundational model prayer we can find tremendous insight, perhaps even call it a summary of Jesus' teaching on the foundational essential Christian life and purpose.

Now there's a basic biblical principle we can see a little later in this chapter, in verse 21. **"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** Similarly, what you pray about and for, there your heart is also. Your prayers are a reflection of your heart. If we want to understand the Lord's heart, the Lord's treasure, we can find it in the Lord's Prayer. So let's dig into the text.

"Our Father..." First of all, this is a shockingly direct and personal addressing of God in prayer: as Father. Secondly, Jesus shockingly incorporates us into his sonship. If there is anyone who could claim exclusive right to address God as "My Father" exclusively, it was Jesus. In teaching us to pray to God as "Our Father," Jesus invites us into corporate familial identity.

In October, at the ministry I founded called CBI Japan, we hosted an event called Love Japan with the help of some Village Church volunteers. We had 2,000 Japanese come out. It was three cities, Nagoya, Tokyo, and Osaka, with a combined population of 60 million people in those three cities. Three days simultaneously in those three cities, three speakers. Don Carson spoke on God's love for us, and John Piper on our love for God, and I spoke on our love for our neighbors.

Surprisingly, Japan has one of the worst situations among industrialized nations for orphans and abandoned children. There are very few people who are willing to adopt or serve as foster parents. So I was challenging Japanese Christians to demonstrate the adopting love of God by adopting the 40,000 orphaned and abandoned children in Japan and helping to make the plight of orphans in Japan extinct. Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday. We can't talk about the sanctity of life without being champions for adoption.

Every single time we address God as "Our Father," we should be reminded of our merciful adoption in Christ and also be moved to consider the plight of orphans. Have you ever imagined what prayer sounds like to God? Every moment of every day, in thousands and thousands of languages, hundreds of millions of beautiful voices of spiritual adoptees calling out to God, saying, "Our Father." One day, our Father will be addressed as "My Father" by children from every tribe, language, people, and nation on earth.

"...in heaven..." Here we see that there's an overwhelming, undeniable otherness of God. God in heaven. God has heavenly perspective that we do not share. He has unbelievable reach. He has grand exaltation, heavenly authority. To this God in heaven we, the global church, are taught to pray. We can see in the first three petitions, this first half, prayer is for worship, kingdom, and obedience.

First, worship. "**...hallowed be your name.**" Here a purpose is now revealed. The first petition Jesus teaches us to pray is toward the glory and worship of our heavenly Father. "Hallowed be your name." It's the New Testament flip side of the third commandment. "May your name not be taken in vain but, instead, be treated as holy."

It's the heartfelt prayer that God will be worshiped and adored. It's a prayer that nothing would compete with our affection for God. We are to pray for a holy and stark, undeniable contrast between the hallowing of God in our lives and the adoration or affection toward anyone or anything else. If I could say just one word, one perfectly appropriate and fitting and glorious word of worship to my Lord for eternity, one single word to capture this worship petition, I think it might be the word *worthy*.

Though the Sanhedrin declared of Christ, "He is worthy of death," each follower of Christ will one day join 10,000 times 10,000 angels in the loud and eternal song of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" So each one of us is to pray and to live out, "Hallowed be your name."

But personal doxology is not enough. God's purposes are global, and God's people should have a holy dissatisfaction with the "worshiplessness" of the world, that more than 2.99 billion people in the world have little or no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and those 2.99 billion do not worship or hallow the blessed and worthy name of the God who created them.

"Hallowed be your name." Not just personal but global, and not just doxological but also petitional. This is not just a doxological statement. "Hallowed be your name." It's a petition. It's a cry to God to mobilize, to work in power to bring about the worship of his name. We'll come back to this.

"Your kingdom come..." This is very much related to the first petition. As each individual hallows and worships God, the kingdom grows. As each family hallows and worships God, the kingdom grows. As each nation hallows and worships God, the kingdom grows. "Your kingdom come, O Lord. Do it, Lord. We can't. Help us." That is our cry. Jesus teaches us to pray kingdom-ushering, kingdom-calling prayers.

So how far have we come toward the building of the global kingdom of God? We've seen tremendous advances. Christianity today is a more global faith than at any time in history. There

are Christians literally in every single nation on earth. Christianity is today stronger in the southern hemisphere than in the northern, stronger in the East than in the West.

This growth, I think, is part of a very important message, that Christianity is not an American religion and missions is not from West to East; it is *from* everywhere *to* everywhere, reflecting both the reality of the global church and also the global goal of our faith. Did you know that today 70 percent of the world's missionary force comes from the majority or non-Western world? The gospel is going forth from everywhere to everywhere.

Christians throughout the world are reaching the lost in their own nations, which is evangelism, and also reaching the unreached in other nations, which is missions. In South America there has been phenomenal growth of the church and a passion for global missions. Brazilians are reaching their own, many of whom have not traditionally been the object of the church's love.

I have a friend in Brazil who has an outreach to transvestites in his city, and they've seen the power of the gospel transform the lives of former transvestites who discover their true identity in Christ. Brazilian churches are also reaching the nations, sending out more than 2,000 missionaries to reach the unreached. It was actually Brazilian churches that were the first I had heard of that were investing 75 percent of their church budgets for global missions.

God is doing amazing things in and through Asians, reaching their own and reaching the world as well. A hundred years ago in Korea, there were less than 20,000 Christians. Today, South Korea alone has sent out more than 21,000 missionaries to 175 nations. The South Korean church today is close to sending out more missionaries than the American church. Did you know that 8 out of the 10 largest churches in the world are in South Korea? In fact, 8 out of the 10 largest churches in the world are in the city of Seoul.

How about China? It has been a tremendous joy and privilege for the Lausanne Movement to help to facilitate strategic planning for a historic national effort by the Chinese church. Did you know that in China there are 100 cities with a population of 1 million or more? In those 100 cities, there are 5,000 train and subway stops. Our goal is to plant a church at every single one of those 5,000 subway and train stations.

Over the past 200 years, an estimated 20,000 missionaries have been sent to China. Now the hope is to send out 20,000 missionaries *from* China to the rest of the world, one for every missionary who

has come to China in the last 200 years. If the Lord blesses these humanly impossible goals, the world will be changed.

I got an email from a friend of mine in Nigeria, Daniel, and I had asked him about his safety because I know he receives death threats one to three times per week because of his outreach to Muslims. He wrote back to me, "Michael, as a matter of fact, last night I was told to come out of my house and that Muslims will come to attack me in the house where I live, but I stayed and prayed, and this is now morning and I am alive. Praise the Lord!" I don't think Daniel needs coffee to perk him up in the morning. "I'm alive! Praise the Lord!" will suffice.

In 10 years through their ministry, they have shared the gospel of Christ more than 40,000 times. During those 10 years, more than 5,000 Islamic scholars and students have turned to Christ. The global church is reaching out and mobilizing from every nation to every nation, but there is much work to be done for the global building of God's kingdom. According to the Joshua Project, there are more than 7,000 unreached people groups in the world that represent more than 2.99 billion people. My mission field, Japan, is the second largest unreached people group in the world.

So we pray, "Lord, may your kingdom come among the 7,036 unreached people groups in the world," and we pray, "Lord, mobilize your church toward that end. Lord, mobilize Village Church toward that end." And for the building of God's kingdom, for the hallowing of God's name, we pray, "Lord, your will be done."

It's a prayer that God's revealed will will be done. The essential way God's will is done and honored is when we, God's people, obey, when we live out the purposes of God in our lives, when we live for God in every aspect of our lives with love for him with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength. Worship, kingdom, and obedience.

So from the first three petitions, let me suggest a summary. Let me suggest that a summary of Jesus' purpose of life for every Christian from every nation is to passionately pray for and pursue the global and eternal worship of and living for God. This starts on the individual level. It also includes family and corporately in the church and culminates globally.

As Christ's purpose for life is lived out by every Christian in every land, the gospel will flow. It will flow naturally and powerfully and passionately from every land to every land. "**...hallowed be your**

name. Your kingdom come, your will be done..." What is this but the passionate prayer and pursuit of global and eternal worship of and living for God?

Now let's move on to the second part of the Lord's Prayer. Good commentators suggest that the first three petitions focus on the preeminence of God while the final three focus on personal needs, but it's more than just that, isn't it? In the first half, Jesus teaches us to cry out to God to accomplish, even through our prayers, even through our lives, God's purpose for global and eternal worship.

The second part is not just a prayer for my needs now, but it's a prayer for provision of all that is needed for such purpose of life laid out in the first section. Let me say this again. The second half of the Lord's Prayer is for provision of all that is needed for the purpose of life, which is to passionately pray for and pursue the global and eternal worship of and living for God, as expressed in the first half.

So the second half of the prayer is intimately related to the first. You can see this, right? It's not just that the first half is the big picture and the second half is the little picture, or the first half is the spiritual side and the second is the earthly, or the first half is the corporate and the second half individual. No. The second half is prayer for the provision of all that is needed for the purposes expressed in the first half.

It starts off like this: **"Give us this day our daily bread..."** It's a prayer for our basic needs. Toward the life that passionately prays for and pursues a global and eternal worship of and living for God we have needs: bread. The standard is not luxury but sustenance. We live in a country where we have to deliberately limit our food intake and the caloric content of our food. Has the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" become meaningless in our society and in our churches? If not, then what could God be trying to teach you?

Would you pray and would you ask the Lord about this? "Lord, why should I even pray this prayer? I don't need to. I have two cars. I have a retirement fund. I have disposable income." Why would the Lord have you pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"? You know, only America could have invented such a term, *disposable income*. Essentially, disposable income is saying that everything beyond daily bread, everything beyond sustenance, is mine. Everything beyond daily bread is discretionary funds.

Perhaps, then, the reason Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" is he wants us to view every gift, every dollar, every resource, not as a personal slush fund but as provision to pursue passionately Christ's purpose for life, for the global and eternal worship of and living for God, and that our passionate living toward and generous giving toward such global purpose might, even foolishly, require us to tangibly need God's help for our daily bread.

Next: "**...forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**" It's the prayer for forgiveness and the power to forgive others. This is a reminder of our most basic spiritual need: forgiveness. It's a reminder of our sinfulness and also of God's mercy. It's a reminder of the gospel, the very foundation of the purpose of God emphasized in the first half of the Lord's Prayer. The gospel is to be received and the gospel is to be extended to others as well.

Some of you may perhaps know a little bit about the story of the gospel in my life. One hundred years ago, the gospel began to take root in Korea, where I'm from. The gospel reached my own family through Presbyterian missionaries. It was that faith that helped them to endure through one of the darkest periods of Korean history, during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

As many as 30 million Asians lost their lives at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army, perhaps the greatest loss of human life in the history of mankind. There was a holocaust in Asia, but no one seems to even have noticed. My own great-aunt was married off as a young teenager to avoid becoming one of the more than 150,000 Korean women and girls as young as 12 years old who were forced to be sex slaves of the Japanese army and endured rape dozens of times per day.

In the strange and beautiful providence of God, he saw fit to eventually send my father to America, only to have him later say goodbye to his son, heading back to Asia to bring the gospel to the land of his former enemy. Racial reconciliation is not just a black and white thing, but there's no doubt that the gospel is the power behind all true reconciliation. From every land to every land, even from Korea to Japan, glorious gospel design.

The forgiveness of the Japanese has been a complicated journey for me personally. Do you know how you can sometimes forgive someone of something, only to learn later much more about what actually happened? It was kind of like that situation for me. During my initial call to service in Japan, I didn't quite understand what it meant that for me as a Korean Japan was my enemy.

It was actually over the years later, during further study and research, that I learned much more of the dark truths about that period of time in history. But more than just learning to forgive and love the Japanese over these years, I think what I've learned the most about has been the gospel. I've learned about my own sinfulness, especially about my own self-righteousness, and about the stunning mercy that God would love someone like me.

Over these 11 years, it has been a privilege to serve God's global gospel purposes in Japan, to live with and serve alongside the Japanese, and to love and be loved by Japanese Christians. I started a ministry called CBI Japan that includes a graduate theological seminary, Christ Bible Seminary, church planting and various outreaches in the city, including the Heart & Soul Café. In fact, two Village Church families joined our team over this past year, the Farmers and the Elkins. Perhaps you know and love them very, very much.

About eight years ago, the Lord gave us a vision to shine the light of Christ in the heart of the city of Nagoya, but with real estate infamously expensive in downtown Japan, honestly there were times where we wondered why God would have us pray for something that seemed almost impossible. During the real estate bubble, which burst about 20 years ago, a 5-feet by 7-feet little plot of land cost about \$100,000.

So we prayed, and after six years of praying, the Lord showed us an amazing property just three stops away from Nagoya Station that was valued during the bubble at \$8 million to \$9 million with a sale price of \$1.3 million. Now missionaries love bargains, so we were really excited about this. A huge bargain, but still about \$1.2 million more than I had ever raised. So we called for 90 days of prayer. Thank you for some of you here at The Village who joined us.

Missionaries around the world donated \$50,000, missionaries from Latin America, missionaries from China, missionaries from Afghanistan. Most of these people I had never met before, missionaries putting their two mites into the offering plate. By day 82, God had provided \$1.3 million. But a few days later, the property was seized by the courts after the business went bankrupt. We were one week too late. We were left wondering what in the world God was doing.

The next Monday, the Lord showed us another property, an amazing property, two and a half times the land size, a larger building, and not three stops away from Nagoya Station and a five-minute walk, but a five-minute walk from Nagoya Station. During the real estate bubble, that property

would have been valued at probably about \$20 million. I'm happy to share with you all that that property is today the home of CBI Japan at the cost of \$1.2 million.

We're trying to shine the light of Jesus Christ in the heart of the city, where so many of the greatest social ills and the hurting populations are. Studies show that as many as 9 percent of high school girls have participated in *enjo kosai*, which is a form of teenage prostitution. Even as many as 4 percent of middle school girls report having participated. Imagine 4 out of every 100 girls in your local middle school.

With such practices, and even with the possession of child pornography being legal, Japan is not a safe place for young people. With bullying and some of the highest suicide rates in the world, Japan is not a safe place for young people. So the Lord gave us a vision to establish in our new building the Heart & Soul Café, which is our safe space ministry, a place where young people can be physically, relationally, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually safe, where they can find true safety in the gospel.

"And lead us not into temptation..." This seems really important. Between our individual salvation and the pursuit of global, eternal worship of God lies temptation. What is this? Perhaps for some that temptation is the worshiping of, the hallowing of, God's very provision. Daily bread hoarded, like the Israelites hoarding manna in the wilderness. Perhaps the temptation includes the idolizing of God's spiritual blessings as well, the idolizing of grace and spiritual comfort.

This idolatry of Christian comfort is something I totally understand. It's the comfort of God's grace and love, the comfort of my own salvation, the comfort of a marvelous guaranteed future. But rather than looking at our own blessed circumstances and then at the unfortunate circumstances of others who are without Christ and saying, "Thank God I'm not them," we need to recognize that our circumstances are by the grace of God alone and pray for mercy that we avoid the temptations of our blessed circumstances.

Have you ever considered for a moment the absolute mercy that you were born into your circumstance? You could just as easily have been born in the slums of Bangladesh or in Nagoya, Japan as a son of a Shinto priest. Mercy and grace. If you had been born in the slums of Bangladesh or as a son of Shinto priest, I ask you how you would want the people in this room to respond. It's so easy for Christians to pray for and live for these verses in the second half, skipping the first section that lays out the very purposes of God for our lives, God's purposes in his world. Too many Christians have made the second half, the provision of God, their purpose.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." There is severe and deadly persecution of the church in many nations around the world, especially in the 10/40 Window. The most severely persecuted church in the world is in North Korea. In North Korea you have all of the greatest human challenges of the world combined: severe poverty, oppressive communism, global isolation, no political freedom, no religious freedom, no gospel.

Around North Korea you can see billboards with the words, "We have nothing to envy." Of course, this is ridiculous in a nation with so little food or no freedom and no hope, but it wasn't always so. In the early 1900s, the capital city of North Korea, Pyongyang, was known as the "Jerusalem of the East." In 1907, the year of the great Pyongyang revival, 50,000 Koreans came to Christ.

But since 1995, more than 4 million North Koreans have died from starvation. According to one source, more than 500,000 have fled to China for survival, mostly women, and 80 percent of them have been raped or sexually trafficked. As many as 1 million have been killed in concentration camps with cruel brutality. Nowhere in the world is Christian persecution so fierce.

Despite the risks, despite the challenges, the church is growing. In North Korea, there are an estimated 300,000, maybe 400,000 followers of Jesus Christ. North Korean Christians who have nothing of worldly value understand that in Christ they have nothing to envy. But we Christians in America, we who have everything, so much food, so much freedom, so many resources, we who have the gospel, we envy.

We envy as we see people around us, as we watch TV. We envy their houses. We envy their cars, their positions, their education, their looks, their boyfriends, their girlfriends, their spouses. We envy. Christian, you have nothing to envy. We have nothing to envy. You have everything, and it's not because of the food. It's not because of education. It's not because of freedom. You have Christ. You have nothing to envy. Can we not learn that important lesson that the North Korean government would teach us? We have nothing to envy.

So how can God use us? If he can wean us from our envy of the world and fill us in the gospel and inspire us by his vision, his purpose for life, how can God use us?

1. *Respond to the gospel.* When Jim Boice, former pastor of Tenth Church in Philadelphia, used to teach about financial giving, he used to say, "Think about the gospel, and then give in response to

the gospel." Very simple. It's the same for the whole of our lives, isn't it? Think of the gospel, and then live your life in response to that gospel in how you use your time, in how you spend your money, in what drives you, in your passions, in what you pray about, in how you view the whole world. Let your life in 2015 be gospel-centered, gospel-focused, gospel-empowered, gospel-responding, gospel-advocating.

2. *Repent.* Repent, brothers and sisters. Repent in every way that our lives are out of line with the purpose Jesus shows us. Instead of saying, "Oh well, yeah, I know these ways my life is not in line with the Lord's purposes..." Instead of resign or "Oh well," we should say, "O God, O Lord, forgive me, change me, use me." Every sin you know of in your life, let's repent.

3. *Pray.* Pray the Lord's Prayer. He has given us a beautiful, amazing prayer. But really pray it. Pray the prayers of Scripture back to God. Pray God's purposes back to him. Make God's agenda your agenda. Make God's passions your passions. He loves it when we pray back to him. Pray for the world.

"Lord, hallowed be your name in Japan. Your kingdom come in North Africa. Your will be done in China." This is a ministry in prayer. Don't underestimate the power of a prayer ministry for global missions. Jesus is teaching us and empowering us for prayer ministry for the world in the Lord's Prayer.

4. *Live it out.* Live out the passions and the purposes of God. How? Invest in God's purposes with the whole of your life. It kind of starts with the basic question of...*How are we to enjoy life properly?* It's such a basic principle and answer. It's such a basic principle that's so simple, but it's also so easy to forget. Hear this clearly. It's so simple. Every gift of God is to be enjoyed as *from* God and not *like* a god.

For example, music. I have a wonderful friend, David Kim, who's the concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He's an amazing musician and also a wonderful Christian brother. Music can be enjoyed without any reference to God, as you all know very well. In fact, it can be enjoyed idolatrously, worshiped, in a sense, like a god. Or it can be employed doxologically to the glory of God, received and also employed as a gift from God for his glory, not worship like a god stealing glory from the true God.

One day, David gave an amazing performance during a benefit concert he did for our ministry back

in 2003. At the end of his encore, David had tears in his eyes, which brought tears to his wife's eyes as well. She said to me, "I've never seen David cry before at a concert." I think that in some sense David found eternal purpose in his music at that benefit concert, what it means to enjoy and employ music doxologically, both for his personal doxology of God and also for the cause of global doxology.

The same can be said, I think, for law, business, sports, sales, etcetera. I've seen God powerfully use music in missions, architecture in missions, sports outreach, technology, arts, medicine. You all have gifts that can be mobilized for global impact and missions. For example, raise your hand if you speak English. So a lot of you. God can use that. English teaching actually is the most common mission work in Japan.

What I'm advocating is the stewardship of life with all things, even the ability to speak English, all things serving God's purposes and passions, every gift, every talent, enjoyed and employed for God and for his purposes. The easiest, clearest, most impacting, and at the same time perhaps the hardest way is with money. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Money is the best indicator of your heart passions and priorities and thus the best place to start, often.

Now I don't know what salary you have, but I do know this room is filled with some of the richest people in the world. If you make \$25,000 per year, you are the richest 10 percent of the world. In fact, if you make \$2,500 per year, you are the richest 15 percent of the world. If you make \$50,000 per year, you are the richest 1 percent of the world.

I was speaking at a conference recently, and one of the seminars being given was on how to become a billionaire. Unfortunately, I was also teaching a seminar at the same time, so I couldn't go. So I'm sorry; I have no good tips for you. But I do want to talk about how to become a millionaire. On the Internet they have a bunch of sites with these millionaire calculators. Have you seen these? You can figure out how long it's going to take until you become a millionaire, depending on how much you have, how much you save, and assuming some percentage return on your savings, like 6 or 8 percent.

If you have no money at all right now but you're determined to become a millionaire, let me try to help you out, because this is important. You'll want to save \$5,000 per year, and at 8 percent interest you'll become a millionaire in 36 years and 10 months. The point is the target is in sight. It's

doable. So drop me an email or whatever it is they use at that time and let me know you made it. Let's pray.

Or let's say you invest \$5,000 per year in global kingdom building. In 36 years and 10 months you'll have been able to invest the equivalent of \$1 million in Jesus' name-hallowing, kingdom-building, eternity-altering global mission work. The point is the target is in sight. It's doable. I guarantee you also that in heaven the return on all the funds invested in God's kingdom will yield you much, much more than 8 percent.

What wonderful discipleship to be able to tell your kids or your grandkids one day that you invested \$1 million in global missions. As a general guideline on giving, I encourage people usually to set aside 10 percent or more for the church and 10 percent or more for global missions, especially for the unreached peoples of the world. Perhaps some of you today by faith would like to try to commit to such giving today.

Maybe at The Village Church it would be 12,000 times \$1 million invested for the global kingdom work of God. If you would have the guts to try something like that, this world will never be the same. I encourage you to just start. Just start somewhere, even if it's 1 percent or 3 or 5 or 7. Just start. I guarantee you you will not regret it. You will not come up to me in heaven and say, "Michael, I *did* regret it."

Let me also mention that transparency in finances with your children allows for amazing opportunity for their discipleship. You cannot disciple your children without talking about money. It's clear from Jesus' emphasis on teaching about money and the content of that teaching that it's one of the most important telling factors about your faith and your priorities.

If so, it will be one of the most important lessons you can teach your children. If you want them to be good stewards of their finances one day, it will be important for you to teach them about stewardship of the finances of their family today. A few years ago, one of my daughters comes up to me and asks, "Papa, are we poor?" That was when I realized, and my wife and I talked, "We need to talk more openly with our kids about finances and about biblical stewardship."

My wife Pearl and I decided to gather our family together every Thanksgiving or so to talk about our family finances and to budget together our church and missions giving and to decide together as a family how to invest those God-given resources. We tell the kids, "This is how much money God

has provided for our family each month. This is how much we spend on X, Y, Z. This is how much we would like to set aside for giving to the church and for global missions. Let's decide together."

It's not a huge amount, but it will eventually allow our family the privilege and the joy to be able to invest for God's global glory the equivalent of more than \$1 million. If God could do that through a missionary family of seven, how could he use *your* family?

At the third Lausanne congress in South Africa, an 18-year-old high school girl from North Korea shared her story. This young girl was born into a wealthy family. Her father was an assistant to the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. Eventually, though, her father's political fortunes shifted, and after being politically persecuted by the North Korean government, he, his wife, and his daughter escaped to China.

In China, a relative brought her family to church, where her parents came to know Jesus Christ. A few months later, however, her pregnant mother died from leukemia. Her father started to study the Bible with missionaries, and eventually the Lord gave him a strong desire to become a missionary to North Korea. But in 2001 he was reported as a Christian, was arrested by the Chinese police, and was returned to North Korea.

Forced to leave his daughter behind in China, he spent three years in prison. Eventually, he was able to return to China, where he was briefly reunited with his daughter. Soon after, however, he gathered Bibles, having resolved to return to North Korea to share Christ amongst that hopeless people. In 2006, he was discovered by the North Korean government and was arrested. There has since been no word from him. In all probability he has been shot to death publicly for treason.

There are those around the world who have risked or given their very lives for the purpose of God, for the hallowing of God's name. Some of you today may be feeling in the depths of your soul a distinct undeniable calling and passion to go into the world as a missionary. The cry of your heart, the conviction of your life, is to invest your everything for God's global glory. Your heart prays, "Lord, hallowed be your name among the unreached of the world," and your heart conviction compels you to go and invest your life to see that hallowing happen.

If so, I invite you to talk with family and friends and the leadership of the church and to ask for their prayers and counsel and to pursue God's calling with prayer and passion. You will not regret it. If you go, I urge you to consider the unreached, to consider the hardest of mission fields, like reaching

Muslims or the Japanese. Expect things to be hard. Expect opposition. It might even come from your own family. But persevere by the grace of God. Persevere.

In 2007, the North Korean girl, who at the time was not a Christian, was given the opportunity to go to South Korea. While still in China, waiting at the Korean consulate in Beijing to go to South Korea, she saw Jesus in a dream. Jesus, with tears in his eyes, called her by name and said, "How much longer are you going to keep me waiting? Walk with me. Yes, you lost your earthly father, but I am your heavenly Father, and whatever has happened to you is because I love you."

She knelt and prayed to God for the very first time and realized, "God my Father loves and cares for me so very much that he sent his Son Jesus to die for me." She prayed, "God, here I am. I just lay down everything and give you my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength. Please use me as you will." Now God has given her a great love for North Korea. She shares, "Just as my father was used there for God's kingdom, I now desire to be obedient to God. I want to bring the love of Jesus to North Korea."

What a fool. If you escape hell on earth, you don't return. What a fool for Christ. But this is the path and the global flow of the gospel, from everywhere to everywhere, even to North Korea, even hell on earth. How many of us so easily choose the path of comfort and safety, the path that is our answer to the question, "What is best for me?"

So many of those whom God has used to make some of the greatest kingdom impact have been those who have not made decisions based on, "What is best for me? My will be done." They've made decisions based on an undeniable, unshakeable, illogical, foolish passion for Jesus Christ and for the building of his global kingdom.

For this girl's father, there was a safe path for him. The door was open for him actually to go to South Korea, where there was political freedom and religious freedom, where he and his family could have been safe, where there is daily bread and much, much more. He could have come to the US to pursue the American dream and enjoyed worshiping God at a great church and enjoyed freedom and Friday night Bible study. No prisons, no persecution, no pain.

Instead, he chose the path of danger that led him, Bibles in hand, back to North Korea, the homeland he loved. Now his daughter has determined to follow that same path. Both father and daughter passionately praying for and pursuing the worship of God among the North Koreans, that the global

gospel flow might not simply end with them lifting their hands in a comfortable pew, in a comfortable place, enjoying the gospel, while North Koreans go to hell without Christ.

"Hallowed be thy name, O Lord, in North Korea. Hallowed be thy name, O Lord, in all the earth." May God grant us all the grace to serve with undeniable, unshakeable, illogical, foolish passion for the hallowing of God's name and for the building of his global kingdom. Now let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Toward that end, O God, toward that purpose, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, amen and amen.