

*September 29, 2019*  
*Finding Trouble: Praying Dangerously*  
*Matthew 6:9-13; Isaiah 6:1-8*

Finding trouble... it sounds a bit dangerous doesn't it?

I'm curious. When you think of activities or things that are dangerous what are some things that come to mind? Maybe its rock climbing without a harness and helmet? Driving over Vail Pass in a snow storm. Dangerous.

Some of you have not been shy in letting me know you think running 100 miles through the mountains is dangerous. Personally one of my most dangerous encounters has been an unsupervised 4 year old, during quiet time, with a blue sharpie marker. Very Dangerous. What else? Sky diving. Asking a woman her age.vDangerous.

But praying?... When we think of activities that are dangerous, praying isn't usually something that comes to mind. How can praying be dangerous? What does praying dangerously *mean*?

Im glad you asked...

To pray dangerously is to submit ourselves to God and His Will. It is asking God to use us for His glory. That God will take us, shape us, mold us, and move us.

Praying dangerously is about coming before God in a posture of availability and surrender.

Praying dangerously is praying prayers that pull us from our comfort zones and our spiritual safety zones. That dislodge us from our personal little kingdoms ruled by the trinity of me, myself and I where everything revolves around our needs and wants.

That is praying dangerously. And praying dangerously will help us, and will move us to step out and find trouble, in the best way possible.

So this week and two weeks from now I want to talk about what it looks like to pray dangerously . We are going to look at four ways we can be doing this. Praying prayers that are not safe.

Because so often our prayers are safe prayers. They are comfortable prayers. They are not bad prayers , but they are mild and safe. It's kind of our nature. Right?

We pray God please give me a great day. Or God please protect me. God watch over my friends and families or give us safe travels. Help me pass this test today. Let me get this promotion. Safe prayers.

And to be clear these are good things to be praying. God invites us and wants us to come to Him in all things. In all types of prayers He hears us and wants us to pray without ceasing.

But if pause and listen to our prayers we might notice how so many of our prayers are about what God can do for me, for us. Sure we pray for others but it often still focuses on us and our hopes, our desires, our will.

If you wanna spice things up a bit, then start asking and praying not what God can do for you but what You can do for God. That is a praying dangerously.

When we start to pray dangerously we are praying prayers that echo or resonate the heart and will of God. A God who is so great, and so big and so dangerous in the best possible way. There is no stopping God and the length He will go in pursuing us and drawing us to Him and making His love and grace and mercy known and available.

He loves us, He sent Jesus to die for us for our sins. That all who believe will be saved. And, actually what I find to be so dangerous is He invites us, He entrusts , He calls us and commissions us to go and carry out His redemption story. To live the Gospel. To tell the world about Jesus. That's dangerous.

I love C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. As a young kid it illustrated so many things about faith and God and His Grace and Love in way that I could grasp and understand. When I think about finding trouble and praying dangerously I think of the scene from *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*.

Mr. Beaver is talking to Susan and he tells her Aslan is a great lion and he is on the move. Susan a bit surprised in hearing this as she assumed Aslan was a man.

*"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"... "Safe?" said Mr Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."*

We serve a King who isn't safe, but He's good. And when we pray to God our King, our savior, our Lord, our prayers shouldn't be just a safe, laundry lists of what we want God to do for us. Our prayers should be big, bold, good, and dangerous.

And so with a warning, these prayers we are going to look at aren't safe... but they are good, and they are dangerous, and God will answer them.

I know this because I've prayed dangerously and I've said some dangerous prayers in my life even before I knew or realized I was praying dangerous prayers. Sure enough, God was faithful in answering my prayers.

Maybe you've prayed some of these dangerous prayers. "God help me to be humble and more like Jesus". "God help me to be more patient with my kids, with the people around me". "God help me to trust you more." Woo baby, that is praying dangerously....

My wife Tina and I try to have a good rhythm of praying every morning together before the kids get up and the day of craziness starts. Our prayers would start out safe... "God thank you for this day. Thank you for coffee, this wonderful gift". But then unknowingly we ventured into dangerous praying territory. "God help us to be patient today with our kids and those we might encounter."

On those days our kids would be bonkers. Traffic would be the worst. Everyone was so annoying. It took me some time, but I finally made the connection between those days and moments and the mornings we prayed those dangerous prayers.

And you know what we don't pray that prayer anymore and let me tell you it has been smooth sailing since:)

We want our cake and eat it too. We want to be more patient but we don't want to actually deal with the things that make us impatient or drive us crazy. We want our faith to grow and trust God more but we don't want to step out of our comfort zones to do so. Praying dangerously will truly help us and move us.

The first way of praying dangerously that I want to talk about this morning is one that many of us are familiar with. In fact many of us pray it every week. But I warn you, it is a dangerous prayer and we need to consider what we are actually praying.

It's in the context of the Lord's prayer. The prayer Jesus taught us to pray. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed or holy is your name. So far so safe.

**"Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done, On Earth as it is in Heaven"**. Warning, warning, Danger Will Robinson. Danger.

We say these words, and truthfully we love the idea of God's kingdom. Can you just imagine if Jesus was right now in physical form on this earth and ruled over everything. No more injustice. No more poor. No more hungry. If you thought the feeding of the 5000 was something, you ain't seen nothing yet! We love the idea of God's kingdom and His rule.

We currently live in this future- present reality of God's kingdom. Right now in heaven God is reigning fully and God's kingdom is a reality. While here on earth God in His will and timing, allows others to rule. For a time God allows Satan to have his small rule and earthly kingdom.

But as God promises and as it will happen. There will be a day when Jesus will return as King, and judge, and savior and all the glory, and all the power, and all the blessings of God's kingdom will be fully established in the new heavens and new earth. And it will be glorious.

Are we praying for that? For His kingdom come, for His will to be done on earth now as it is already taking place in heaven?

Do we really want Him to come and rule over us. Do you really want a ruler?

If we are honest we don't always welcome God's kingdom with delight. We love our little kingdoms. Where we rule and we are in charge. Right?

I want my life, my job, ministry to be comfortable. I want people to like and appreciate me and fill my love sponge. I want to control situations and relationships to benefit me. I want people to affirm my opinions and do things my way because obviously it's the right way.

I want my daughters to appreciate how blessed they are to have me as their father. I don't want to be uncomfortable. I don't want to suffer. I don't want to live without.

It is humbling to admit, but I want my kingdom to come and my will to be done, and if we can be honest I don't think I am the only one that feels that way at times.

How often when we pray or talk to God are we trying to tell God what to do? Or how we have already decided on something that we know is best for us and we are just asking God to bless it, or to make it happen in our timing.

What we are actually praying or saying is "my kingdom come my will be done."

To pray " God, Your kingdom come, Your will be done" is praying dangerously, because it dethrones our rule, and our control. It overthrows our established mini kingdoms.

It means, "God, Your will be done ...in my life, in my family, in my finances, in my job, in my school, in my children, in my dreams for the future, in my words, in my friendships in all of it . May it be shaped by God's Will.

It means loving God with all of your heart soul and mind and loving my neighbor as myself.

It means surrendering to God and experiencing the freedom and the abundant life that Jesus offers us as our chains to sin and ourselves are broken

Are you willing to say, "God I commit everything I do, everything I say, and everything I choose for the sake of your kingdom and not mine?"

Are you willing to pray, "God, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done,—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen?"

**The second way of praying dangerously is praying a prayer of availability.** The "send me" prayer.

If we are praying for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven then we need to understand that God is calling each of His people to something. To go and make disciples. To share the Gospel . To be His hands and Feet and live as kingdom people.

Craig Groeschel, pastor of life church talks about how people generally respond to God's calling. Three ways in particular.

There is Jonah who says, "here I am, I am not going!" "Nope... not today Yahweh." Maybe you have had a similar response. You felt God was prompting you, nudging you to something or someone. To reach out, to take a step of faith, to talk to that person, to serve somewhere but for whatever reason or excuse you pushed it aside. "Here I am, but I'm not going".

And I've been there and I've responded to God in that way and part of me often wonders what growth opportunity, what kingdom moment, what blessing I missed out on, by saying no.

Next is Moses who says, "here I am, send somebody else."

This is a majority of us and can be so easy for us to do. We recognize and acknowledge there is so much need in this world, so much injustice, and something needs to be done about this. Someone needs to reach these people.

And we think somebody else, somebody better equipped, somebody with more time, resources, influence, younger, more energy. So we pray safely.

"Here I am, send somebody else."

We don't often pause to consider and realize we may be that somebody. We may be the somebody that God is calling, that God desires to use, that God wants to do extraordinary things through.

This is a room full of somebodies. Everyone say, "I am somebody" . Turn to your neighbor and say "you are somebody."

And God is calling You and wants to work and move in your life beyond what we can ask or imagine, we just need to be willing and available.

Which brings us to Isaiah and the third way of responding to God call. "Here I am, send me." Dangerous praying.

Maybe like me, you find this prayer a bit unsettling. Maybe it makes your palms sweat, fills you with anxiety. For so long I was afraid to pray this because I just knew God

would send me to some far-away country, where they don't speak english and they don't have Taco Bell.

I have to tell you though, God is probably not going to send you or me to a distant land. Then again maybe He will.

It's more likely He's going to call and is already calling you to be a missionary right here. Where you work, or live, or go to school because that's holy, and God's calling too.

It's more likely that he's going to call you to serve and love the people that are in front of you, to be faithful with what he's already given you

I believe He is calling us right now, right here in our own communities in our day-to-day. To be a light, to share the message of God's love and Jesus' sacrifice. To love our neighbor Here.

At our work places. At our schools. In our neighborhoods. In our relationships.

Maybe it looks like praying for someone. Praying for one of our students or children as in the Pray For Me campaign. Maybe it's serving in our community. Maybe it's mentoring someone. Or maybe it's to become a freedom partner with IJM.

Start here with what is in front of you and pray simply and dangerously, "Here I am Lord, I am available, I am your servant. Here I am, send me!"

So how do we get to this place of surrender and availability?

There are two main things I see in our Isaiah passage. The first one is we need to experience God's presence.

When Isaiah experiences God's presence he was overwhelmed and in awe and wonder. But Isaiah was transformed from his experience in God's presence that brought him to a place of surrender.

Have we or are we experiencing God's presence? Do we make time to be still, to listen, to invite and ask God to fill us and make His presence known in our lives. It begins with God and we can't get to a place of surrender without His working and without experiencing His presence.

The second thing that brings us to a place of surrender is God's grace. When Isaiah is in the presence of God he is made quickly aware of his sin and brokenness and unworthiness but then we see an experience of God's grace. God forgives his sin and makes him clean.

When we realize and recognize our sinfulness and brokenness and how on our own we can't save ourselves but then experience God's grace it changes and transforms everything and we can't help but respond "Here I am, send me."

It is all God and His redemptive work and His amazing grace that transforms us and moves us to a place of surrender and availability. It's not a "Oh, I guess I'll pray this prayer. After all, I should." No! It becomes a prayer filled with joy and honor and excitement. "I get to serve and be used by God who gave it all and loved and served me through Jesus Christ.

I want to close with another dangerous prayer that echoes and resonates praying dangerously, "Your kingdom, Your will be done" and "Here I am, Send me." Let us pray this together.

*Disturb us, Lord, when  
We are too pleased with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true  
Because we dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
Because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when  
With the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst  
For the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life,  
We have ceased to dream of eternity  
And in our efforts to build a new earth,  
We have allowed our vision  
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
To venture on wilder seas  
Where storms will show Your mastery;  
Where losing sight of land,  
We shall find the stars.*

*We ask you to push back  
The horizons of our hopes;  
And to push back the future  
In strength, courage, hope, and love.*

*This we ask in the name of our Captain,  
Who is Jesus Christ.*

-Attributed to Sir Francis Drake