

The Lord's Prayer

2. Thy Kingdom Come

Our study of the Lord's Prayer now moves us to look at the second petition – Thy Kingdom Come. If there is nothing else that is learned from this sermon series it has to be this:

1. Much prayer, much power.
2. Little prayer, little power.
3. No prayer, no power.

There is power in prayer and that is no more true than in the part of the Lord's Prayer we're talking about today: "Thy kingdom come." Today, we're talking about the power of praying for one main thing:

1. God's kingdom

So, what is God's kingdom? When Jesus first started his ministry, he announced the kingdom of God was at hand. Sometimes when we use the word "kingdom" we think of a place or an area with geographic and political boundaries. But the Greek word for "kingdom" in the Bible puts the emphasis on the rule or reign of the king rather on the place that king exercises that reign. In fact, some Bible translations translate the Greek phrase "kingdom of God" as the "reign of God" or the "rule of God" to bring out this idea. So some may ask, so if Jesus announced the kingdom or reign of God, why do we see so much evil in the world still? Clearly, the kingdom of God has not reached fruition. So we live in a time of tension between the

establishment of God's kingdom and its consummation. Some Bible scholars call this a tension between the "already" aspects of God's reign and the "not yet" aspects" of God's reign. The powers of evil have been defeated by Jesus through his death and resurrection, yet because of the "not yet" there's still evil in our world. So when we pray, "your kingdom come" we're not asking for the "already" part, but we're looking forward to the "not yet" part when God's will shall always be followed.

1. So when you pray for God's kingdom, what image of the kingdom do you have in mind?
2. Why is that important?

The truth is, if you don't have an idea about the kingdom of God, then you're just praying empty words.

Even more, what you think about God's coming kingdom will shape your behaviour and life in the present one.

1. If I believe God's kingdom is one of justice then I am going to engage in activities that promote justice.
2. If I believe that God's coming kingdom is about caring for the poor, then I am going to be about caring for the poor.

So praying for God's kingdom is praying for God's law, God's heart, God's will and God's values to be established among us.

And what does that look like? I think Dr. Martin Luther King began to paint a picture of the kingdom of God here on earth when he stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, and preached, "I have a dream..."

He said:

1. "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'
2. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
3. I have a dream that one day....the state of Mississippi....will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
4. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.
5. I have a dream today.
6. I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama....little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

He was imaging the coming kingdom of God and dreaming what it would like in the present day.

When you have an image of the kingdom and begin to pray this prayer earnestly, you not only ask for the kingdom of God to come to pass, you begin to seek the kingdom of God.

- The song says, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all his righteousness...
- Similarly, like the words uttered by Ghandi – “ be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Our prayers therefore, will begin to be part of the arsenal of God for change.

It is also through those prayers that God begins to move us to be partners in the building up of God’s kingdom.

And we begin to echo the words of the prophet Amos to “let justice roll down like a river and righteousness a never-failing stream.”

So:

1. We want to see whats right in our society
2. We want to do whats right in our society
3. So matters of:
 - Racism
 - Discrimination
 - Exploitation

- Xenophobia
- price gouging

...Should become real concerns for us, and trouble our spirit.

There are two things we do when we pray for God's kingdom to come.

First, we are inviting God's Kingdom to come in us...to enter and rule over our lives that we may become His subjects. And as His subjects we make it our business that nothing enters our bodies, for example, that brings harm or offend our King.

So:

1. what I eat, what I drink will be checked with care.
2. I will not permit narcotics, drugs, stimulants, sedatives, or other harmful materials to enter my body unnecessarily and therefore pollute the Kingdom.

The same applies to my mind and emotions.

I shall carefully monitor the material I read and the movies I watch, lest my King be offended.

The conversations I listen to, the music I hear, the radio programs I listen to will be carefully scrutinized to see that no subversive material intrudes on the Kingdom and influence my thoughts.

In the area of my innermost mind, will and spirit, I shall see to it that no subversive ideas, suggestions, attitudes, or human philosophies contrary to Christ's teachings and commands will infiltrate my life.

The Kingdom of God is within me.

The truth is, there are things in our lives that we are not aware of that the King does not like. So, Psa. 139:23-24 NIV) says "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting".

We can also ask God to establish His Kingdom in our family and friends

A. Some of us need to pray for our spouses.

B. Some of us need to pray for our children.

B. We know the weaknesses of our family and friends- pray for them.

C. We know the trials and tribulations of our friends and family, pray for them.

D. Ask God to bring His kingdom to their hearts.

1 John 5:14-15 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him."

Second, when we pray for God's kingdom and reign to come in the world. In this, we are affirming our confidence in the future culmination of God's plan. This prayer is a statement of faith that God's plan of salvation cannot be undermined, derailed or defeated. When you look around the world, it can seem like God's kingdom is anything but being established and built.

1. A loved one is taken from us by a drunk driver.
2. Cancer rears its ugly head in your life.
3. A child dies in a drive by shooting.
4. A marriage breaks apart.
5. A Christian friend betrays us.
6. War breaks out in the Middle East, or Russia invades Ukraine, or planes flying into buildings, or starvation in parts of world, or homelessness, or drug use. And the list goes on...

And doubt and uncertainty can arise in us. So in those times, when we pray "your kingdom come," we are affirming our confidence that God's plan will be completed in spite of all the evil in the world we see and experience. We affirm that God's kingdom will come to fruition. Living in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" and praying for God's kingdom, we affirm our confidence that the culmination of God's plan will come to pass. And we have a part to play in realizing God's plan.