

Your Kingdom Come

Matthew 6:10

February 19, 2017
Steve DeWitt

I am so thankful we have a week of prayer at Bethel Church. It keeps the priority of prayer before us and I hope calls us to more prayer in our church and in personal lives throughout the year. There's an easy answer to this question, *does God want more or less prayer in our church?* More.

Why? The same reason parents want to talk with their kids. I think of that powerful scene in Mr. Holland's Opus where the Hollands realize their son is deaf. Mrs. Holland is devastated by this and in one scene weeps as she cries out, "I just want to talk with my son!" That scene connects because it is what every parent wants to do. God is our heavenly Father. How God's heart must long to talk with us. Prayer is talking with our heavenly Father. It would seem natural for us to enjoy the incredible privilege of talking to Almighty God, but prayer is one of those areas of the Christian life that we struggle with the most.

It was the same in Jesus' day. This is why he dedicated so much of his Sermon on the Mount to prayer—more than to anger, adultery, fasting, and many other important things. He taught his disciples to pray. They came to him at least once and said, *teach us to pray like you pray.*

This highlights another reason prayer should be a solid part of our spiritual lives—Jesus prayed. He prayed so differently that Jewish men who had heard prayers their whole life were mystified by his prayers.

So this Week of Prayer, we are going to look at two phrases in Jesus' model prayer. This week we're doing, *Your kingdom come.* Next week, *Your will be done.* I'd like to read the longer section first and then focus on the petition, *Your kingdom come.*

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 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.'"* (Matthew 6:5–13 ESV)

There is a lot here about prayer and our heart motivations in prayer. Don't pray to impress people. Beware of mindless repetition. Pray knowing God already knows what you need.

This is a model prayer from Jesus. We call it The Lord's Prayer, which is unfortunate. It is the Christian's prayer much more than The Lord's Prayer. It is a model prayer; an example to follow, not mimic. These words are very familiar to any long-term Christian, which is the

danger in them. You have said it many times, perhaps hundreds of times, but do you know what *Your kingdom come* means?

Let's discover that with the simplest of outlines. Here it is. Point number one: **Your**. Point number 2: **Kingdom**. Point number 3: **Come**. Nothing confusing here.

Your

If you look at the structure of The Lord's Prayer, what jumps out is that the petitions of the first half all begin with "your;" "*hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done.*" Who is the starting point in prayer? God. It is not until the second half of the prayer that anything about me is there, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*"

We so easily get this backwards. We rush into prayer quickly with our requests and needs. There is a time and place for that, *God I need help!* But our regular prayer pattern should start with God. "*Our Father in heaven....*"

"Your" reminds us that prayer is first about God and not about me. Listen to your prayers; is there a lot of you in them? God delights when we talk to him and about him. Like what? Give thanks to him and start with the big things. Creation. His character and attributes. His saving works in history. His self-revelation in the world, His word, and his Son. Start with God.

"Your" is a word of humility. "Your" reflects the fundamental heart shift genuine salvation requires. "Your" means not me. "Your" means my reference point for life is God. "Your" leads me to God-centeredness. "Your" is a Godward ambition. "Your" is less of me and more of you.

Kingdom

"Your KINGDOM come."

Here is our now familiar word around here as we have been teaching on the kingdom of God for several months.

We have to understand the kingdom of God to ever properly understand the kingdom of man. We were born in the kingdom of man. Raised in it. It feels normal to us. The kingdom of man is also known as the kingdom of Satan. Remember, this rebellious kingdom began in the heart of Satan as he rebelled against God. He birthed it by temptation in the heart of Eve and then Adam and his rebellion against God spread and infected the cosmos. Satan became the king of the universe.

- *The prince of this world* (John 14:30 NIV)
- *The god of this world* (2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV)
- *Ruler of this world* (John 12:31)
- *The power (kingdom) of Satan* (Acts 26:18)

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world. Jesus didn't dispute they were his to give.

We were born in this kingdom. It feels normal even as our conscience reminds us that it shouldn't be this way. Deception. Murder. Rape. Sex industry. Our conscience is repulsed by this world and quietly whispers to us that there is another one. A better and beautiful one.

The kingdom of God. It is the reign of God which expresses all the purity and glory that is God's. Heaven displays it perfectly. Earth did until sin destroyed it.

Jesus' coming brought that kingdom of God back to earth. He took Satan's temptation in the wilderness and he overcame Satan's ultimate weapon, death, when he died on the cross and was resurrected. Now he rules and reigns in a kingdom that is usurping Satan's. Jesus rules in the human heart by faith and exerts his authority through love, truth, and the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation. It is the power of the future kingdom expressed in the here and now.

We are citizens of the kingdom of God living in a world dominated by the kingdom of Satan. We long for God's kingdom to fully express itself here. This is the essence of this phrase.

I long for your kingdom, God! I long for your glory and purposes to be accomplished. I long for evil and injustice to be thwarted. I seek your kingdom and its righteousness and its values and priorities. I seek the one true King Jesus and all his glorious purposes in this world. I long for your kingdom. Not mine. Not Bethel's. Not Indiana's. Not the United States' kingdom. I long for your kingdom, O God. Your kingdom come!

It's not moving God toward my agenda but moving my agenda toward God. It's not about me getting more of what I want but me wanting more of what He wants. It is a prayer longing for his divine purposes to be accomplished in the world and in my life. In prayer, this reminds us of where our daily emphasis should be and it stirs desires toward the King and his kingdom.

Come

The Greek form is an imperative. It means "urgency." *Your kingdom come! Please, may it come now!*

What does this mean? How does God's kingdom come? I thought it was already here. It is. Jesus brought it and his final word was, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)

So it's not like we are fans in the stands hoping our team wins and asking God to bring the victory. Jesus has already won the victory. He established his kingdom on earth by his death and resurrection. There is no uncertainty in "come."

"Come" acknowledges that we are not yet in the time when the fullness of Jesus' victory is seen throughout the world. Jesus is not here physically. The world is still in rebellion. The effects dominate the news and the debris is seen all around us. "Come" is the hopeful expectation of Jesus' ultimate and final victory. "Come" expresses the longing of the Christian's heart for God's purposes to be accomplished in the world and in my own life.

God's kingdom is here now. Jesus is enthroned in my heart now. But we long for a greater and fuller expression. We long for the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2:10)

We long for the end of sin and pain and injustice and death and evil. We long for the day when justice will "roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:24) We long for that ultimate day when Jesus' kingdom is the only kingdom and Satan has been defeated. That longing urges us to pray that God would do what he has

promised and do it soon. The last words of the whole Bible are, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

Do you have that longing in your heart? Can you honestly pray, *Your kingdom come?*

It's not just the consummating kingdom we want to come. We want the present kingdom of God to "come." This is a missions cry. When I pray for God's kingdom to come I am praying that God would make his gospel effective all over the world. I am praying for the worldwide church. I'm praying for pastors and leaders. I am praying for all Christians everywhere. I am praying for my church and its faithful witness. I am also praying God's kingdom to come in my own life. *Use me God! Use me today for your glory! Use me to bring your kingdom blessings to my family and coworkers and friends and neighbors.*

We are hypocrites when we pray for God's kingdom to come and then don't lift a finger to help. Give no personal money to help. Invest no time and effort to help. Your kingdom come is a personal pledge that today I will give myself along with all my brothers and sisters in the world, to do all I can to advance your purpose of saving sinners from their sins. Is your heart there? Leon Morris says, "If we pray that way, we must live that way."¹

The kingdom is here (Earth) and here (heart). When I ask God's kingdom to come, I invite God to do his work in my life and through my life. Kevin DeYoung gives the analogy of the sun on a cloudy day. When the clouds part and the sun shines through, we don't think the sun just came. It was always there. We say, *the sun came out. The sun broke through.*

That is what we want. Jesus is on his throne. The world can't see his glory. There is a spiritual fog that has enveloped the hearts and minds of men. *Your kingdom come. May your kingdom's light shine through. Help people see. Help me see. May the whole world be filled with your glory!*

When Does God Answer That Prayer?

He does it now in so many ways. He answers that prayer when the faithful testimony of the believing wife persuades a husband to become a Christian. He answers that prayer when the prodigal son returns home. He answers that prayer when feuding Christians make peace and forgive. He answers that prayer when a man is freed from addiction to narcotics or porn by the power of Christ. He answers that prayer when he is honored to heal as a display of his power. He answers that prayer whenever a sinner bows to Jesus and believes.

But there is an ultimate and future answer to that prayer. Millions of Christians have prayed hundreds of millions of times, *Your kingdom come*. Someday that prayer will be answered in a universal way. Revelation describes the moment,

"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.'" (Revelation 11:15)

The kingdom comes fully when the King comes. Until then, we celebrate every indication that his power and presence are here right now. We pray for more and more of it. And we pray for the day when the King and his Kingdom have finally and fully *come*.

¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 145.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Permanent Text Edition® (2016). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

© 2017 by Steve DeWitt. You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that: (1) you credit the author, (2) any modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include Bethel's website address (www.bethelweb.org) on the copied resource.