

## **Introduction**

When I was growing up, my immediate family lived in South Carolina while my grandparents lived a thousand miles westward. One pair lived in Oklahoma and the other in Texas. Getting to see those grandparents was a treat. They would make the trip once or twice a year. When we learned they were on their way, we would excitedly anticipate their arrival. When they finally pulled up in the driveway, what a joyful time we would have.

Even now when Philip and Ellie are coming from Louisville for a visit, we get an idea of what time they are to leave and then we check with them every so often on their phones to keep a handle on how far they have come and how soon they will arrive. And when they get here, we meet them at the door with hugs and smiles. It is so good when they come home.

Well, Jesus is coming back. And he is coming back as king. And though it will be soon, he does not want us to be so consumed with when it will be, but that it will be. And he teaches us in the second petition of this prayer guide he has given us that we should pray for this coming. But there is more to it than just that.

[Read Text Matthew 6:9-13 and Pray]

When we pray, we come to address Our Father in Heaven. He loves his children. He has the resources of the universe that he has created at his disposal. He is ready to supply us with everything we need. He is truly amazing. And the item of first importance that Jesus teaches us to bring before the Father as a petition is a plea that his name be honored as holy. The guiding drive in our prayers should be a concern for the reputation of God. We voice our desire to him that he be treasured and adored by us and by this creation which he has made. We are praying for the glory of God.

This morning we come to the second petition that should guide us as we pray. We are taught to pray for the coming of God’s kingdom.

## **I. The Request.**

As with each of these petitions, we must take note of the fact that this one as well is just that. A petition is a request. These are things we are to ask God for. And these are the guideposts which are to steer our prayers. Here the request is, "Your kingdom come." It is a plea that God will bring his kingdom to come, to advance toward us. I am going to come back to this point at the end this morning in order to apply what we will study about this kingdom into how we are to pray.

## **II. The Kingdom.**

The second petition focuses on the kingdom. That is the object of the petition. Our Father is the implied subject. The action being requested is for him to let it come. The object in regard to which we are asking him to work is the kingdom.

A. A kingdom is a locale with people under the rule of a king. It is not a democracy or a republic. In these structures of rule, the power is largely in the hands of the citizens. They vote and they petition. Public opinion generally carries the day. Jesus is not instructing us to pray for a republic or a democracy but for a monarchy, a kingdom. It is not a monarchy like that of England today in which the royal is more of an emblem than an actual ruler. Rather, it is more like the monarchies of history past wherein the king rules over and governs the people. It is not government by the people and for the people. It is government by the king and for the glory of the king.

B. The world has known many kingdoms. The history of the world is a history of the rise and fall of nations. You may remember Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon. Remember his dream? He saw a great and exceedingly bright image. The head was fine gold. The chest and arms silver. Its middle and thighs were bronze. Its legs were iron and its feet were iron and clay. Daniel explained that the statue represented succeeding kingdoms. Each one would be succeeded by another until the point of culmination when a superior kingdom would arise. And so it took place. Kingdom succeeded kingdom. The world has witnessed the rise and fall of many kingdoms. But which kingdom are we to pray for? We are to pray for that superior kingdom. In this prayer Jesus calls it "YOUR"

kingdom. It is the Father's kingdom. It is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven.

God's law and God's authority are the hallmarks of this kingdom. As we read in Psalm 96 this morning, all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. The psalm exhorts us to ascribe to him glory and strength; to worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; and to say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"

Besides the Lord, there is but one other king, the prince of the power of the air. He is Satan, the god of this world. It is not his kingdom for which we are to pray. His is the enemy kingdom. He is bent on opposing the kingdom of God. Nor is Jesus saying that we should pray for one earthly nation or another. All these kingdoms rise and all these kingdoms will fall. The kingdom for which we are instructed to pray as the second petition is the kingdom of God. He owns it and he will see to it that his kingdom endures, crushing all others.

C. The owner of this kingdom is God the Father. And the king is none other than his only begotten Son, Jesus. His kingship is the fulfillment of God's covenant with David spoken in 2 Samuel 7. "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom . . . I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

So, it is no wonder that when Matthew begins the good news, he writes, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David." Yes, it is Jesus who is the promised king, the king who will reign. Revelation 11 points to the culminating day saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever." When Jesus encourages prayer for the coming of the kingdom, he is encouraging prayer for the kingdom of which he is the king.

When he was on the earth, the kingdom was near; it was said to be "at hand." It was near because the king was present. In chapter 12, Matthew records that a blind and mute man under demonic oppression was brought

to Jesus, and he healed him. Everyone was amazed and began to wonder if Jesus could be the Son of David, that is the Messiah. "No, no, it can't be," said the Pharisees. They argued Jesus was using demonic power. However, Jesus exposed the silliness of their argument. He explained that if "Satan casts out Satan, he would be divided against himself and his kingdom would surely not stand." And he continued, but on the other hand, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The conclusion of this event recorded in Matthew 12, then, is this: The people were asking could this be the son of David, the promised Messiah? And Jesus answers resoundingly, "Yes, I am!" Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah, who exerts the power and authority of the kingdom of God. He is its king. And as he is present in that role of exerting authority over other dominions, he can assuredly say that the kingdom of God is present right there right then.

But the full ascendancy of Jesus to the throne of the kingdom demanded his death. We think of Philippians 2 for example. Here Paul reminds us of the humility of Jesus that he was willing to let go of heavenly glory in order to fulfill the plan and will of the Father. BECAUSE HE BECAME OBEDIENT TO DEATH, God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at his name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord. By his death, you see, he in fact purchases the kingdom, the people of God.

If you want to be a part of this kingdom, there is no way in but through Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by him. In Adam all die; only in Christ will they be made alive to populate His eternal kingdom. Are you in Christ? You come to him by faith and repentance. By nature all are dead in trespasses and sins, separated from God by our disobedience of his holy law, deserving eternal torment and punishment from the glorious king. If you are not with him, you are against him. You must turn from being against him and be with him. You do this by turning away from sin and embracing what this king has done for sinners. His death brings repentant sinners into the kingdom. Those who intentionally and consciously trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved. They become citizens of this kingdom whose king is Jesus. So I beg, plead, and urge those in this room still yet to repent to turn from sin

today and trust in Jesus. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus today! Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Jesus' sake will save it.

D. The kingdom of God and His Christ, this monarchy is a superior monarchy. It is ruled by the king for the king, but this king rules in the interest of his people! It is like no other kingdom the world has ever known. Do you remember how the Israelites had rejected God as their king? After God had brought the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land of promise and they lived through the days of the judges there came the time when Samuel was getting old that the people wondered who their next leader would be. They wanted to be like the other nations and have a human king. They came to Samuel and demanded that he appoint a king over Israel to lead them like all the other nations. The Lord told Samuel to warn the people about the ways of such a king who would reign over them. Here is what he said. This is 1 Samuel 8:11-18. It really makes an impression when you read these verses. Listen.

He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will TAKE your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. 12 Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will TAKE your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will TAKE the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. 15 He will TAKE a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. 16 Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will TAKE for his own use. 17 He will TAKE a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. 18 When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

A pivotal word stands out starkly. It occurs verse 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. Six times! It's the word TAKE. This is what earthly kings do to the people. They take from them and use for themselves. And the result is a languishing populace. This is a warning from the Lord. To reject him as

king for someone like them means getting a ruler who will take from them and use for him, and as a result they will cry out for relief. The king takes and the people cry out.

What a difference between God as king and a man as king! With God as their king, they had been his treasured possession. He had brought them out from oppression on eagles' wings to himself according to Exodus 19. And according to Deuteronomy 32:9ff., the Lord regards his people as his portion, his treasure. "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." I could go on and on. As king, the Lord God governs by himself and for himself, but that is good news because his governing for himself and for his glory includes governing for the good of his people, whom he loves. God is not a leech sucking the life out of his people, but he is the very one who breathes life into his people.

Here it is in the New Testament. In Ephesians 1 Paul is praying that the Ephesian believers will be able to understand some very important realities. He wants them to know (one) the hope of God's calling, (two) the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and (three) the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe. This is evident, says Paul, in the Father's raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. Finally Paul says, "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body." Listen, those who are in God's kingdom are not there to be used but to be blessed.

The history of Israel's monarchy is mostly a tale of failure and abuse with few bright spots, and even the good kings had their warts. But the kingdom for which we are to pray is a glorious kingdom with a glorious king. He is selfless. He came to serve the subjects. He is like a caring husband who nourishes his bride. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. His kingdom is a flock, and he tends his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Yes, this is an extraordinary monarchy with an extraordinary king. This king does not live off his subjects. His subjects live off of him and are pleased to live for his glory.

This kingdom is a kingdom that you want to be a part of. Paul says in Romans 14 that the kingdom of God is a matter of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This is the kingdom for which we are to pray.

Next, we need to notice

### **III. The Advancement.**

A. The petition focuses on the kingdom and asks for God to move it. Pray, "Your kingdom COME." Coming implies movement. It is movement towards the point of reference. Going is movement away from a point of reference. Coming is movement towards that point of reference. It is to advance toward it. The point of reference here is the one who is praying. The one who is praying is calling for God to move the kingdom in his direction, to get closer and closer, and finally to arrive.

The joy in welcoming loved ones for a visit begins when you know they are planning to come. Anticipation intensifies as the day for their departure gets closer. And it escalates even more as they leave their place and drive toward yours. The excited anticipation is what it is not simply because they started in your direction, but because ultimately they come to your place. The first question we ask Philip and Ellie when they tell us they are coming for a visit is how long can you stay? This prayer is for the kingdom to make progress, to get closer and closer, and finally to arrive and to stay.

B. The kingdom of God is moving nearer and nearer.

We see it as we look back, as we look out, and as we look forward.

Looking back, we see the kingdom of God on the move. Far back we look and see that God's kingship was in place when he created the world. But his kingship was rejected by Adam and Eve when they sinned against God. Then God chose a nation to be his people. They too rejected him as king. So at last he came as the God man in the royal line of David.

When Jesus walked the earth, there is a sense in which the kingdom had come. The king was here, and he was proclaiming that the kingdom was at hand. He was demonstrating God's kingdom authority over illness and demons and nature and death and sin itself. But the kingdom did not arrive in its fullness. It was already there but not yet in its fullness.

Looking out we also see that there is a sense in which the kingdom is present at this very moment. Right here right now, Christ rules in the hearts of his people. The kingdom is present in his church. And the kingdom is coming more and more as the king takes hold more and more in the lives of his followers. And the kingdom is coming more and more as people are brought out of the domain of darkness and into the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom is coming. It is on the move. But it has not yet fully arrived.

We see the kingdom coming as we look to the future. All things have been put under the subjection of Christ, but not all of his enemies have been destroyed. Jesus is reigning, but the course of time that leads to his return ultimately results in the destruction of every opposing kingdom and the glory and majesty of his rule being enacted over all here. Your kingdom come. Where? Here. Jesus is set to return and his kingdom will come in its fullness.

Paul shows us something of these stages in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

Paul tells us that when Jesus returns . . . 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

So, see. The coming of the kingdom involves a progressive coming and a final arrival. The final arrival is when all opposing forces and kingdoms are



brought to destruction and even death is put to death, and the Son hands the kingdom over to the Father. This is what we are to pray for when we say, "Your kingdom COME:" the ultimate subjection of all things to Jesus Christ. This he will bring about when he comes. What a day that will be!!

#### **IV. The Relevance to Our Prayers.**

So what does this mean for our prayers?

A. It means that God has ordained that our prayers matter. They matter for the most important event of world history that remains before us—the second coming of Jesus Christ. We are told that we should pray longingly for that day to come. We should see prayer in the big picture. As we pray for the details, as we pray for the small things (not unimportant and not little to God), we need to pray with a sense of the role that they play in the coming of the kingdom.

What do I mean? I mean that we should have an enlarged perspective about the requests we make known to God that they pertain to more than just the immediate situation in which we find ourselves. It will help guide us in what we pray for and how we pray for it. Even as we pray for those who are sick or those who are struggling with temptation, we should pray with a view to the coming of the kingdom. Sickness and sin being defeated are a part of the coming of the kingdom. Lost sinners being saved is part of the advance of the kingdom. Evil being vanquished in our hearts and lives is part of the coming of the kingdom. And we should pray in this way.

Stand amazed that God has ordained that our prayers matter for bringing in the kingdom. And pray accordingly.

B. Second, not only do our prayers really matter, they are ultimately directed towards the return of Jesus. There should be in the hearts of the people of God a longing and yearning for the return of Jesus. The martyrs in Revelation ask "How long O Lord?" How long til you will avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? The psalmist in Psalm 13 asks, how long O Lord? And the last prayer uttered in the Bible is John's. Jesus says, "Surely, I am coming soon." And John replies, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus!"

Our hearts and our prayers should, as Pater says, hasten the coming day of God.

## **Conclusion**

I close with a reminder this morning that I hope will fill you with joyous expectation and fuel your prayers as the people of God. This part of Jesus' prayer to guide our prayers reminds God's people, kingdom citizens, You were not saved to be stuck in the bondage of this world under the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. You are saved for a kingdom whose king and ruler is the Good Shepherd. You have been saved for a kingdom of righteousness. You have been saved for a kingdom of rest and joy and peace. You have been saved for a kingdom which joyously submits to its king and a king who rules in the interest of his people. And that kingdom is coming. It is on its way. Pray that it will fully come soon! Hasten the coming with your prayers. And hasten the coming with your lives. Kill sin in your life. Reach out to the lost. Faithfully spread the gospel of the kingdom. The coming of the kingdom means more people coming into the kingdom.