

Week #2 *REQUEST GOD'S KINGDOM*

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”

What does it mean to pray, “Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”? One thing is clear, there is a contrast between God’s will being done perfectly above and God’s will being done only partially or imperfectly on earth. The center of this line from the prayer is that the Father’s purposes be carried out as wonderfully below as they are above. In heaven when the Father speaks, reality is altered and the will is done immediately. On earth, when the Father speaks, some choose to obey, some choose to ignore, some choose to resist, some choose to reject, some take years to come to a place of obedience, and the occasional believer listens again, because she wasn’t sure that it was God speaking in the first place.

Heaven and earth are not identical!

But the thrust of this prayer is that earth respond to God just like heaven does! That is quite a faith-filled prayer, given Jesus’ knowledge of the human condition! This isn’t optimism, clothed in the language of believing. It is realism, with sordid reality faced and considered, and receiving a gift of faith to believe that God can accomplish even that through the blood of Christ and using the gift of his Sanctifying Spirit upon a miserable lot of humans caught in their sins.

To speak of a kingdom implies a King. Kings in Bible times were to be obeyed on pain of death. To be a king was to have your will done. This second line of the Lord’s prayer implies that God was and is King in heaven. There his will is done, and there are no other pretenders to the throne.

On earth however, there is a battle over whether earth itself will be subject to God or to Satan, the false spirit who presides over death, destruction, disease, despair, misery, gloom and pain. The Bible teaches that:

- 1) God, a being of pure Spirit, created the earth and formed the creatures from its dust.
- 2) To oversee the planet, he formed humans of dust (from earth) and breathed his very breath into them (Spirit) making humans to be in perfect harmony with both God and the earth. We were made to fellowship with creation and Creator, like no other being on the planet, for the unique purpose of oversight of earth in submission to God.
- 3) Satan, a false spirit, usurped the kingship of the planet. The humans, by deception, found themselves obeying the serpent’s will instead of God’s, and thus, Satan became the defacto overlord of earth through their obedience to his rule. Sorrow, sin and death entered the creation through that act.
- 4) God acted immediately to win creation back, promising a descendant of the human line would crush the Serpent’s head, even though the Serpent would bruise his heel.
- 5) God himself entered the human line through Jesus Christ. As soon as the Spirit of God came upon him at his baptism, he immediately faced the powers of darkness (Matthew 3:16 to 4:11). Two kingdoms came face to face in that encounter, the kingdom of God in Christ—a) a second Adam sent to take back the fallen world, and b) the kingdom of darkness under the usurper Satan. Unlike the first Adam, the second one didn’t yield to deception or the lie. This was the beginning of the kingdom of God reclaiming this fallen world from the kingdom of darkness. All through Jesus’ ministry, he proclaimed the kingdom of God, which included taking away from Satan all the effects of his evil rule. He did this by healing the sick, casting out demons,

raising the dead, teaching unearthly truth, confounding the world system and ultimately by “baptizing [his followers] in the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Simply put, to pray “Your kingdom come, your will be done” is to pray a “S/spiritual warfare” prayer. This prayer is to say to God that you, with Jesus’ Spirit, are partnering together against all the forces of wickedness in making God’s rule effective to usurp the evil rule of the devil. Clearly this is no prayer to pray if you want to stay just as you are! Don’t be afraid though. The gates of hell will not prevail against the church. It does mean that we storm them, rather than let them attack us. That is what this prayer is about.

Rev. David Chotka

Week #2 Request God's Kingdom

Day #1

There is a relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit.

And knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do you sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you... Matthew 12:25-28 NASB

In this passage, Jesus had been accused of partnering with the devil, of using unclean spirit-power to cast out unclean spirit-demons as a con-job to win people over to darkness. This section is loaded with kingdom language, for both the unclean and the clean uses of kingdom power.

- 1) How many kingdoms are pictured in this material? Are they earthly or spiritual kingdoms?

- 2) What are the marks of a kingdom that stands? What are the marks of a kingdom that falls? By implication does Satan's kingdom fight itself? Does God's?

- 3) How does the kingdom of God show itself in this material? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life in causing God's kingdom to come? Is there a relationship between the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God?

- 4) What does this mean then for those who would pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"

Thought for the day:

Lord, to pray this prayer is to take on the forces of darkness. Do not let me pray this prayer lightly or flippantly. Let the power of the Holy Spirit lead me into those areas in which you want God's Spirit to expel the influences of evil. Amen.

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Day #2 God's Kingdom Wars with Satan's

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

*“Now the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death... Woe to the earth...because the devil has come down to you... So the dragon was enraged with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
Revelation 12:7-11,12b,17-18 NASB*

Revelation 12:1-6 contains a telescoped picture of the story of redemption. A woman (the people of God) gives birth to the future ruler, Jesus. A dragon, (Satan), tries to destroy the child. He ascends to heaven and takes up his throne. As soon as the child becomes the heavenly king, war occurs in heaven between the forces of God under Michael and the forces of evil under the dragon. The dragon is expelled from heaven.

- 1) What was declared immediately after the dragon was cast out of heaven? What does this say about the nature of the kingdom of God? What does this mean then for our praying “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven...”? Is there a war element to kingdom praying?
- 2) What does the dragon do? Where is the war now? With whom is Satan at war?
- 3) The enemy uses one weapon—deception. What are the three means that we can use to overcome the dragon? What does this mean as we seek to be those who live for God's kingdom?

Thought for the day:

The kingdom of God is declared here only as Satan's forces are expelled. To pray “Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven” is to say to God, “Just as you threw out Satan and all his influence from heaven, so we are joining you in destroying his influence here on earth. Show us how to be agents of God's power right in the face of Satan's influence. Amen.

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Day #3 The Spirit Is Given to Empower Us

“John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...” They were asking him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest parts of the earth.” Acts 1:4-8 NASB

- 1) Notice that Jesus mentioned the Holy Spirit and the disciples immediately thought of an earthly kingdom for Israel. Did Jesus tell them that the two concepts were not related? What did he tell them about instead of an earthly kingdom? What does this mean then about the role of the Spirit and the coming kingdom?

- 2) What is the effect of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that Jesus mentions in this material? How will this cause the kingdom to come?

“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17 NASB

- 3) Given the text above, what is the outcome of the kingdom of God? What is the relationship between the kingdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit?

- 4) What do these two texts together imply about the Holy Spirit in order to pray for the Kingdom to come? Is the Holy Spirit to be experienced? How does that work itself out in everyday life?

Thought for the day:

The kingdom of God is not something outside of us. Rather the kingdom of God is the rule of the Spirit of holiness in our very hearts and minds, equipping us to proclaim our faith and live a righteous life. God grant us this baptism in the Spirit so that we can pray “your kingdom come” from the heart.

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Day #4 The Kingdom of God Turns Our Priorities Upside Down:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me... Matthew 18:1-5 NKJV.

In earthly circles of power and influence, we use nearness to greatness as a barometer of success. Greatness usually means power, prestige, resources, ability, strength, wealth, and even sheer force to dominate and take charge. Jesus' kingdom is utterly different.

- 1) Brainstorm a list of synonyms for the term "greatness". What did you come up with? Think of the kingdom of ancient Rome. What was regarded as the greatness of that ancient kingdom?

- 2) Brainstorm a list of things that a child can do. What are the marks of "child-likeness?" Compare the two lists. What are the points of difference?

- 3) Jesus indicates that we must be converted and become as little children to enter the kingdom of heaven. What then does this mean for our praying, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven? What then does it mean to humble ourselves as little children?

- 4) In the New Testament, demons seize control and use sheer force. Jesus hangs dead on a tree and waits for the Spirit to raise him to life. He invites us to join him in dying and to also wait for the Spirit to raise us to life. How then are we to serve Christ and his kingdom?

Thought for the day:

Lord Jesus, our praying for the kingdom to come must never become an exercise in dominating or controlling others, even when we long for them to do things that are godly. Teach us to relinquish control and to trust you to raise to life that things that we release into your hands.

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Day #5 The Kingdom of Christ will change the one who prays.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking find pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Matthew 13:44-46 NASB

In these two parables Jesus compares the discovery of God's kingdom to the discovery of tremendous treasure. We all know what we would do if we found treasure—we would do everything we could to obtain it, up to and including selling off everything else to get it.

- 1) Have you ever discovered something precious and realized that you needed to act quickly in order that it might become yours? What did you do to make sure that you could move ahead with this?

- 2) There are two ways of reading these parables. One is the classic approach—to understand that this refers to our doing everything we can to obtain entrance into the kingdom. But the other way is to realize that every other kingdom parable with an explanation refers to what God did in seeking us out. In that case, we are the hidden treasure, or the pearl of great price that God gave up everything to obtain. If both are put together it means that God highly esteemed us and gave up his Son. We in turn are to do everything we can to esteem God in our lives. What must you do to raise that level of esteem toward the Lord?

- 3) If the kingdom of God means the rule of Christ over our lives and society, what changes are needed? Where is your time being spent? On what do you spend your money? What is your principle worry this week? Are your relationships with your coworkers authentic or false? After reflecting on this for a few minutes write down what needs to occur for Jesus to become king of each area:
 - a) My use of time:
 - b) My use of finances:
 - c) My main worry:
 - d) My relationships with coworkers:

Thought for the day:

Lord Jesus, “your kingdom come” is no prayer to pray unless I want my life to be altered radically around your purposes instead of my own. Teach me that your kingdom priorities need total devotion, like finding a treasure in a field. Amen.

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Day #6 Sometimes the kingdom will for our lives leads to turmoil in our soul.

And he came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation. And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will, but Yours be done... And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" ... Luke 22:39-42,44 NASB

The word "kingdom" isn't in this section of the gospel, however following the will is. This is the only recorded instance of Jesus asking the Father for some other way. In fact, this is the only "if" prayer that Jesus ever prayed. The reality was, for the kingdom of God to come, Jesus was going to have to undergo crucifixion. Here, Christ already *knew* what the will was, and it so disturbed him that he sought the Father for a different path. In his earthly humanity, He did not want to do what He knew God was commanding. Sometimes submission to the will to accomplish the kingdom is that difficult.

- 1) When Jesus prayed this prayer with such agony that he sweat drops of blood, asking for another way than the cross, what was God's answer to him? What does this say about our free and easy way of asking God for "stuff", for an easy way out, for anything that avoids trial?

- 2) Have you ever agonized in prayer and sensed God say, "No.?" Remember that time and record it here. What was the boldest request that you have ever made of God? Was the answer "yes", "wait" or "no"?

- 3) Jesus only prayed one "if" prayer and that was when he knew exactly what God wanted. What does this say about our "if it be Thy will" prayers? Are they a cop-out, a desire to be in submission to God, a lack of awareness of what God wants done, or something else? What does this prayer teach us about the prayer, "Your kingdom come, your will be done?"

Thought for the day:

Lord Jesus, preserve me from the cop-out prayer that fails to apprehend your mind about the things of God. And preserve me from the cop-out prayer that prays away what needs to be accomplished for your will to be done. Amen.

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Day #7 Jesus Prays for Us.

You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.
Luke 22:28-32 NASB

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us..." Romans 8:33-34 NASB.

Here once again we see a picture of God's kingdom in contrast to the powers of darkness. Satan wants to "have at" the leader of the new apostles. Jesus prayed for him, and through him the power of the kingdom of God flowed on the day of Pentecost.

- 1) What was it that Jesus had to undergo to receive the kingdom from His Father? Was it difficult? What does the text imply we must do to "eat and drink at [His] table in [His] kingdom? What does this mean for our praying, "Your kingdom come, your will be done?"
- 2) Jesus is aware that Satan doesn't like Simon's loyalty to Christ. What does Jesus indicate to him as a promise? Would the prayers of Christ have meant anything to Peter? Would they mean anything to you?
- 3) Notice that Jesus is even now praying for us from his position of perfect sinless perfection. In heaven, Jesus can see the end and the beginning at the same time. He prays without error. What would you want Jesus to pray for you? How would this affect the way you live now for his kingdom?

Prayer for the week:

Lord Jesus, we have spent the week reflecting on the phrase "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is unearthly praying. It is warfare against the dark forces of this present darkness. It places us in direct conflict with Satan himself. Pray for us that we not lose heart. Pray that we too would rise to strengthen other believers. Amen.