

“Thy Kingdom Come”

During the Lenten Season, the Christian world spends six weeks preparing for Christ’s death and resurrection. During these weeks, our Gospel lessons on Sunday morning have focused on the sufferings of Christ, on the plot to kill Him, and the events leading up to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

This Sunday, Palm Sunday, we will be focusing on Jesus’ preparation for the final sacrifice that paid for all of our sins as He enters into Jerusalem. During these mid-week Lenten services, we have been taking an in depth look at prayer. We have been examining the Lord’s Prayer petition by petition. And we will continue doing this through Holy Week and Easter concluding on Easter with Thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever and ever. Amen.

It is appropriate that we spend this Lenten Season focusing on prayer as we prepare for the celebration of Christ’s power and glory being revealed in the resurrection. Just as Christ used prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane to prepare Himself in the hours leading up to His suffering and crucifixion, we see the power

of prayer in our lives: how prayer makes us ready for and helps us through our suffering, how our Father in heaven wants to hear from all His children; how He is always ready to listen; and how He is always ready to answer our prayer.

The petition: “Thy kingdom come” is probably the most overlooked of all the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. When we pray, we pray for our daily bread; and for forgiveness; and for deliverance from evil. Those are things that we can understand. Those are things we see a need for in our lives every day. But what are we praying for when we say, “Thy kingdom come”?

First, we need to define God’s Kingdom. He really has three kingdoms. He has the kingdom of power (God, as King, rules over the entire universe.) He has the kingdom of grace (God, as King, rules over the church on earth.) And He has the kingdom of glory (God, as King, rules over the saints and angels in heaven.)

When we say, “Thy kingdom come,” we are not dealing with all three of these kingdoms. We do not pray for God’s kingdom of power to come, because it is already here. In regard to the kingdom of glory, it comes of itself at its appointed time, but we pray that it comes soon so that the suffering in this world comes to an end.

But, most of all, we pray for His kingdom of grace. We pray

that, through the Holy Spirit, we believe His Word and lead godly lives as members of His kingdom of grace -- as the fellowship of saints in His church on earth. So that when His kingdom of glory does come, we pray that the Lord preserves us in His Church on earth, so that on that day we leave the Church on earth, and join the Church Triumphant; that we, and all the Church with us, would rejoice as we leave the kingdom of grace, and enter into the kingdom of glory.

But also, we do not pray only in regard to ourselves. We pray also that the Holy Spirit uses us to bring other people into the Church, into the kingdom of grace. We pray that God gives us the will and the strength to be the tool that He uses us to extend the kingdom of grace in our family, in our community, and in the world.

It is God's will that the message of the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ be preached and taught to every person on earth. And it is God's will that the unbelieving people of this world cease rejecting the Holy Spirit and the message of forgiveness.

When praying for the kingdom of grace to come to our lives and the lives of those around us, as in everything, we pray, as you have already heard this Lenten Season: "Thy will be done." God's kingdom of grace has come to you because this is God's will for you. It was not of your choosing. God's Kingdom of Glory will

come in His time and according to His good and gracious will. Just as there was an appointed time for God to create the heavens and the earth and for His Kingdom of Power to come into being, there is an appointed time for Christ to return and usher in the Kingdom of Glory for all the children of God.

But mostly, when we pray this petition, we pray concerning our place within God's Kingdom of Grace. There was also an appointed time for you to come to know the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There was an appointed time for you to come and be baptized. In His Word, God says, "Before I laid the foundations of the world, I knew your name."

You are a part of His Kingdom of Power. You have a place in His Kingdom of Grace. One day, you will behold His Kingdom of Glory. Until that day, we continue to pray, "Thy Kingdom Come." Amen.