

Wellspring – Life & Teaching of Jesus

(39) Sermon on the Mount – Your kingdom come (Matt 6:10)

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:9-10)

The Primary Focus of Prayer

Today we’re going to focus on what I believe is the primary focus of the Lord’s prayer – the heart, the focus of what all prayer is about... it’s about the kingdom or rule of God being released on the earth. This kingdom is perfectly expressed in heaven, and it is God’s will and purpose that his kingdom rule is released on the earth. How does this happen? God chooses to work through his people – we are the ones called to release his kingdom on the earth – and to do this we have been given right of access to go into heaven – into the very presence of God – where we can find out what is on his heart and pray it into being, thus releasing God’s kingdom onto the earth.

What is the kingdom?

The kingdom of God is, quite simple, the rule and reign of God. When we pray “Your kingdom come” we are praying for the visible manifestation of God’s rule and reign here on the earth – his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. We know that God’s will is done in heaven, but often we see a different kingdom at work here on earth. The focus of this prayer is based around the expectation that through our prayers and kingdom lifestyle this can change

Popular end-time theology has robbed the church of this expectation

In much of evangelical Christianity there has been no expectation that we will see an answer to this prayer in our generation. We have been taught that it is only after Jesus returns at his second coming that His kingdom will be established on earth. The expectation is that in the last days the devil will get stronger and stronger and most of the church will fall away and become very weak – and then when all seemed lost Jesus would come in a mighty rescue operation called “The Sudden Rapture” when the church would be taken up to heaven to escape the coming time of great tribulation upon the earth.

During this time of tribulation, Israel would suddenly turn to the Lord and be gloriously saved and would be empowered to evangelise the world for 3½ years and there would be an end time harvest. Jesus would then return visibly to the earth, accompanied by the church and establish his reign for a thousand years. Satan would be bound during this time and human beings would taste the glories of His kingdom during this period. At the end of this period Satan would be loosed again to test the hearts of the people and would succeed in deceiving many. Then would come the final day of judgement, the whole earth would be cleansed by fire and Satan and all those in rebellion against God would be cast into the lake of fire. A new heaven and earth would be established in which His kingdom would be finally and permanently established in all its glory.

This dispensational view of end time theology was taught by J N Darby and popularised by the Scofield Bible and books like *The Late Great Planet Earth*. It has been embraced by much of the church during the last century and is one of the great deceptions of our time. Because of it, much of the church in our day has been trained to think in terms of passivity, smallness and defeat, still seeing Satan as the prince of this world. Prior to the onset of this teaching the church had a much more optimistic and victorious view of the church in the last days.

Yes there will be a visible, glorious return of our Lord Jesus at the end of this age. Yes, he will come as an all-conquering King and every eye shall see Him. Yes, those believers alive at his return, Jew and Gentile alike, will be caught up in the air to meet Him in a joyful rapture as He returns with all his saints to the earth. Yes, it is only then that His kingdom will be fully and finally established on the earth in all its unpolluted glory. But the course leading up to these events is very different.

Instead of a weak defeated church, God’s people will pray the Lord’s prayer with belief and faith that it will be answered. A glorious end-time Church will gain much new ground in many nations and win many great victories over the devil. There will be a forceful advancement of the Kingdom of God against all opposition. There will be a

mighty end-time harvest as the return of Jesus approaches even though it will also be a time of trouble and conflict. There will be warfare and suffering, but the church will remain powerful and victorious through all of this.

Throughout Jesus' ministry he taught that the kingdom of God (or heaven) was "at hand" or "near". That in itself puts a great hole in the dispensational view of the kingdom. After Jesus returns is nearer now than then, but was certainly not "at hand" when Jesus preached it. The focal point of Jesus' preaching and ministry was the cross and resurrection. That is when Satan's grip on the earth was loosened, and the way opened for the kingdom of God to come in power and be established on the earth.

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. (John 12:31-32)

Our primary job on this earth is to work with the Holy Spirit to forcefully advance the Kingdom of God. We must ensure that God's kingdom is fully established in our own hearts – that we are living in that kingdom – and then we can pray the prayer and really mean it – and expect that we ourselves will be part of the answer!

Living in the kingdom

Jesus is our example of what it means to live in the kingdom. He lived his whole life in total dependence and total obedience to His Father and made himself fully available to the Holy Spirit. He lived his entire human life within the Kingdom of God – never for one moment did he step out of it into independence. As a result, his human life was untouchable by the evil one.

John the Baptist began his ministry with the cry "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt 3:2). Living in the kingdom starts with repentance – not merely sorrow for sin, but a radical change of mind that transforms how we actually live. Instead of living to please ourselves, we live to please and obey God. We consciously place ourselves under His rule and reign and say "not my will, but yours be done."

John also preached that Jesus was the one who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This is the other aspect of life in the kingdom. It is a life lived, not in my own strength and power, but in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. I need to receive the Holy Spirit, to invite him to take full control of my life, not merely as a one off experience, but daily. As I allow Him to take control, I become a human instrument that He can use to forcefully advance the kingdom.

It starts in heaven

Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing (John 5:19). His focus was on heaven, and what he saw happening in heaven he released on earth. We have the same privilege. We have been seated with Christ in heavenly places, far above every principality and power with all things under our feet (Eph 1:19-23, 2:6). We are not called to bring in the kingdom from an inferior position, but from one of ruling and reigning with Him! We need to learn what it means to live life from a heavenly rather than an earthly perspective.

Releasing heaven on earth

The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not merely that we get filled up and blessed, but that our lives become a source of blessing into the world around us.

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. (John 7:37-39)

Those streams of living water, the release of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives, are what bring the Kingdom of God from heaven to earth. It starts in the place of prayer, but we take the Holy Spirit with us and can release his power and blessing wherever we go. This is our mandate!!