

# Sermons on Matthew

## The Lord's Prayer

Part Four  
Thy Kingdom Come  
*Matthew 6:10*

*With Study Questions*

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**In this \_\_ manner, therefore, pray:**

**\_ Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Your \_ name.**

**<sup>10</sup>□ Your kingdom come.**

**\_ Your will be done**

**On earth \_\_ as *it is* in heaven.**

**<sup>11</sup>□ Give us this day our \_\_ daily bread.**

**<sup>12</sup>□ And \_\_ forgive us our debts,**

**As we forgive our debtors.**

**<sup>13</sup>□ And do not lead us into temptation,**

**But \_\_ deliver us from the evil one.**

**\_\_ For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory  
forever. Amen. -(Matthew 6:9-13)**

### **What's a Nation?**

Sitting on the brink of yet another presidential election, many of us ponder the greatness of our nation, and lament that greatness is ebbing.

I am not embarking upon a political speech. I mention our nation so that, by analogy, we may better understand the second petition in the Lord's Prayer which is "**Thy kingdom come.**" What is this kingdom of which Christ speaks? What do we mean when we pray for it to come? And how do we participate in its advancement?

What is a nation? And what makes it honorable? What manufactures and perpetuates greatness in a land or a country? Is a nation merely people, borders, infrastructure, laws, documents, and a symbolic flag? These are certainly components of a nation, but these components are the eruption rather than the impetus of a nation.

The core of a true nation, a great nation, is much more personal and intimate than its outward components. If our nation is great, that greatness was something kindled in the heart of its founders—something they wished to preserve and perpetuate through the components of its documents, and the message symbolized by its flag.

In short, a great nation starts in the hearts of its leaders, then flows into its variegated elements in order that those elements might reveal, inculcate, generate, and bolster the very heart in which the nation was conceived. We see, therefore, both inward and outward aspects of a nation; such also is the case with the kingdom of God.

## **What Are We Praying?**

What is the kingdom of God and what do we mean when we pray and work<sup>1</sup> for its advancement?

John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching about the kingdom of God. The gospel of Matthew, more than any other book in the Bible, is emphatic about the kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount begins and ends with references to God's kingdom. Before we can pray and work for its advancement, let us ascertain what it actually is. In what terms does the Bible speak of God's kingdom?

## **Characteristics of God's Kingdom**

### **Anticipated and Transferred**

In the Old Testament the nation of Israel foreshadowed God's kingdom. The actual genesis of God's kingdom, however, was to be concurrent with the birth of its King (Isaiah 9:6, 7). This was a much anticipated event. Joseph of Arimathea was "**himself waiting for the kingdom of God**" (Mark 15:43).

Christ's work of redemption marked that period in history when the kingdom would be transferred from the type or foreshadow (Israel) to the anti-type or substance (the church); it was taken from Israel and given, as Jesus taught, "**to a nation bearing the fruits of it.**" (Matthew 21:43) The kingdom would no longer merely be one nation, but it would be a holy catholic (universal) kingdom.

Numerous times we read that the kingdom of God was "**at hand.**" Jesus made it quite clear that His presence meant the ushering in of this kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup>Although there are times when all we can do is pray, say, for the health of a sick friend, more often than not our prayers are to be accompanied by our actions. We pray for our daily bread but we must work for it as well.

**But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, \_\_surely the kingdom of God has come upon you (Matthew 12:28).**

It strains the text to suggest that this kingdom is the future millennial kingdom we hear so much about in books like *Left Behind* and the *Late Great Planet Earth*. The King has come and with Him His kingdom.

### **Growth and Permeation**

In the kingdom parables we learn that God's kingdom would, like a mustard seed, start small, then grow large until the end of history (Matthew 13:31-33). We learn that, like leaven permeating a loaf, the kingdom would have a profound effect upon all areas of life (Matthew 13:33). The Bible seems to indicate that even though this kingdom is not like other kingdoms, all other kingdoms will eventually be won over by this kingdom.

**Then \_\_the seventh angel sounded: \_\_And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, \_\_“ \_The \_\_kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, \_\_and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15)**

The success of this kingdom will be accomplished by the zeal of the Lord of hosts (Jesus, Isaiah 9:7) and appears to be the task of Christ throughout history.

**Then *comes* the end, when He delivers \_\_the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. <sup>-25-</sup> For He must reign \_till He has put all enemies under His feet. (1 Corinthians 15:24, 25)**

### **Not a Political Kingdom**

The kingdom of God is not like other kingdoms, with borders and flags and a military. The means by which the kingdom advances is not like worldly kingdoms.

**Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)**

## **Material and Immaterial**

Even though God’s kingdom is not of this world, it certainly is in this world. In one sense the kingdom of God has a temporal and observable side to it; it could **“come near to you.” (Luke 10:9)** But in another sense, the kingdom is very spiritual, being **“within”** people (Luke 17:21) and something **“flesh and blood cannot inherit” (1 Corinthians 15:50).**

So we are not to view the kingdom of God as merely spiritual, or merely physical, but both. Although the blessings of this kingdom have a spiritual and eternal aspect to them, Jesus taught that the blessings (and trials - Acts 14:22) would be found in history as well.

**“...Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>-30-</sup> who shall not receive many times more *in this present time*, and in the age to come eternal life.” (Luke 18:29b, 30; italics mine)**

## **Entrance in the Kingdom**

Entrance into the kingdom of God can also be very puzzling. Entrance into the kingdom of God is the context of Jesus’ well-known statement **“With men this is impossible...” (Matthew 19:26b).** But these words were followed by the comforting assurance that **“...with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26c)** The faith necessary to enter the kingdom of God (something impossible for men to generate) is granted by God Himself (Philippians 1:29). When asked about His kingdom parables, Jesus revealed the power of God at work.

**He answered and said to them, “\_Because \_\_it has been given to you to know the \_\_mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.” (Matthew 13:11)**

This is accentuated when Jesus informs Nicodemus of the astounding prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom.

**Jesus answered and said to him, “\_Most assuredly, I say to you, \_\_unless one is born \_\_again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.\_” (John 3:3)**

We’ve seemed to have gotten used to thinking that this rebirth—or birth from above—is something we are capable of achieving through the mere force of our own will; but clearly, with man, this is impossible. We do not regenerate ourselves. God regenerates us from above.

## **Heaven**

In perhaps its most consummated sense the kingdom of God is heaven itself.

**Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘\_Come, you blessed of My Father, \_\_inherit the kingdom \_\_prepared for you from the foundation of the world...’ (Matthew 25:34)**

## **For What Are We Praying?**

So what are we praying for in the advancement of God’s kingdom? What is the outward manifestation of God’s kingdom for which we are to pray? What is the heart of God’s kingdom for which we are to pray?

## **God’s Kingdom Revealed in the Church**

In the same way a nation's heart is revealed and perpetuated by its laws and documents, the heart of the kingdom of God is revealed and advanced in an outward manifestation; and that outward manifestation is *the church*.

In a temporal and physical sense, the heart of the kingdom of God is revealed through Christian churches—local churches—which together form the holy catholic (universal) church. These are the organisms where the King's law and gospel is preached, His sacraments are administered, His praises are sung, and His victory is proclaimed.

The church might be compared to the nation's capital. As you walk through the nation's capital you see copies of its original documents, you see memorials of the great victories, testimonials of its great leaders, and so on. These are all designed to reveal the heart of that nation and inspire those who visit to engage in a similar great enterprise.

There has been recent downplay of the importance of church. The value of the church has not always been viewed as so expendable. The Westminster Confession (1640s) teaches something astonishing about the church.

**The visible Church...is the *kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (italics mine).** (Acts 2:47) (1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Cor. 12:12–13, Ps. 2:8, Rev. 7:9, Rom. 15:9–12) (1 Cor. 7:14, Acts 2:39, Ezek. 16:20–21, Rom. 11:16, Gen. 3:15, Gen. 17:7) (Matt. 13:47, Isa. 9:7) (Eph. 2:19, Eph. 3:15)<sup>2</sup>

Clearly Christ ordained that there would be local churches with pastors, deacons, elders, preaching, sacraments, *etc.* (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1) who would be responsible for the handling of the sacred message which is the power of God to salvation. So Christians must be leery of those who downplay or despise the local church, for they, in a certain sense, are downplaying the kingdom of God.

We must highly esteem Christ's church. For that sacred message which God has entrusted by His Spirit to His church is where the heart of the kingdom of God resides. The word and

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<sup>2</sup>*The Westminster confession of faith*. 1996 (Chapter XXV, 2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

sacrament is the touch-point between the mundane and the divine. So what are we praying for when we pray for the advancement of God's kingdom?

### **Thy Kingdom Come**

When we pray "**Thy kingdom come**," we are praying for the advancement of Christ's church. We are praying for open doors and abundant success in the planting of those venues called churches, where the law and gospel of Christ is preached. We are praying that those who take rank against the church, both at home and abroad, are either converted or removed from positions of power and influence, for word and sacrament are only instruments of God's grace if they are actually performed.

This should not surprise us! Do not all of God's people praise His Name when formerly dark and oppressive nations finally welcome those who come in the Name of the Lord? Do we not all recognize in the most ordinary sense that God's ministers need passports and access to some turf where they can proclaim the heavenly message?

So when we pray "**Thy kingdom come**" in the most mundane sense, we are praying for church buildings, or at least settings, where congregations can gather to hear and to see. We are praying for favorable legislation when it comes to the setting up of those buildings or venues. We are praying for pastors/evangelists who can be subsidized and devoted to full-time ministry. We are praying that the planes, trains, and buses carrying ministers arrive safely to their destinations, and so on.

When we pray "**Thy kingdom come**" in a ministerial sense, we are praying that churches and pastors hold fast to, and contend earnestly for, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We are to pray that the church maintain its purity, and resist amalgamation and contamination from the world by which it is surrounded. We pray that pastors, elders, deacons, and members will ever recognize that the preaching of the law and gospel of Christ and the proper administration of baptism and the loaf and cup are the means by which God will advance His kingdom.

And when we pray "**Thy kingdom come**" in a spiritual and supernatural sense, we are praying that God will bring to bear upon the hearts of men the truth of the person and work of Christ, their

only hope; that they may call upon His Name and be set free from the law of sin and death. We are praying that men may seek to serve this loving, gracious, and benevolent King of all kings as the kingdom of God grows within their very hearts. And we are praying that these efforts have worldwide success—growing and permeating every nation, kindred, and tongue until the consummation of history to the glory of His hallowed Name.

### Questions for Study

1. What are the components of a nation (pages 2, 3)?
2. What makes a nation great (pages 2, 3)?
3. What foreshadowed the kingdom of God in the Old Testament (page 3)?
4. When did the kingdom of God essentially begin (pages 3, 4)?
5. How is the growth of the kingdom of God described (page 4)?
6. How is God's kingdom different from worldly kingdoms (page 5)?
7. Is the kingdom of God to be thought of a material, immaterial or both (page 5)?
8. How does one enter the kingdom of God (pages 5, 6)?

9. What is the outward and physical manifestation of the kingdom of God (page 7)?
10. For what are we praying when we pray for God's kingdom to come (pages 7-9)?