



Worship – Part 17
Acts of Worship – Part 5
Prayer: Thy Kingdom Come
GCSP – 09/01/2007

How many of you enjoy being alive? Do you enjoy the blessings this life has to offer? Do you take time to look at, listen to, smell, taste, and touch the things in God's creation? Are you thankful for family and friends? Do you enjoy the fruit of your labor by being able to purchase the things that make your life comfortable and enjoyable?

I know we all have to endure the hard times, and during those times we may struggle answering the above questions in a positive tone, but by and large I think most of us get a certain measure of enjoyment from this life.

But therein lays a danger to Christians, for this world is not our home. And if we grow too attached to this world and the things of this world, we will find our spiritual life becoming anemic. An overconsumption of the world system and the things within will curb our appetite for spiritual things – eventually starving our spirit to death or near death. It would be like trying to survive physically on nothing but potato chips and soda pop – not fatal to your physical body if consumed in moderation along with eating and drinking nutritional foods, but eventually fatal if they are the only foods you consume day in and day out.

God created this world for our enjoyment but we must remember that Satan is the current ruler of the world system we are a part of, and he has temporarily perverted God's design and God's plan. Satan has enticed mankind to follow his leading instead of God's. He has caused us to value the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, higher and in place of seeking first God's kingdom.

So when I asked you if you enjoyed this life, your answer should be yes, but it should have a condition. We should all answer, "Yes, but I long for the day when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His earthly kingdom." We should all be ready at a moment's notice to let go of everything we hold dear in this world in exchange for the world to come.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Matthew 6**.

We are working our way through a passage that is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. I have mentioned several times that this is meant to be a model prayer, not necessarily a prayer to be repeated word-for-word. So I am looking at each phrase to help us gain a better understanding of how Jesus instructs us to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'" (NASB).

Let's pray.

We have already worked our way through the principles of having a proper attitude in our prayers, of looking to God as our loving and compassionate daddy, and of knowing who God really is and showing Him the proper honor, reverence, respect, and adoration. We must come before God in prayer with His purposes and His glory in mind and not our own selfish desires at the forefront of our minds.

The beauty of this model prayer that we see right off the bat is the wonderful balance. We can view God as our Father – our “Abba” or papa – and run to Him when we have a need, when we are afraid, or when we just want to whisper our hopes and dreams into His ear, but we also must hallow His name. And as we studied last week, this doesn’t simply mean His physical name, but His character and everything that is God. We are to honor and glorify and magnify and exalt God in our prayers and in our life.

I proposed that most Christians struggle with this because they do not truly know God – they don’t know His character. So we spent last week looking at many of the names of God to help us begin to understand His character and who He really is.

Hallowed be Your name is the very first request in this model prayer – which shows us that when we come to God in prayer, the asking should first be outside of ourselves. Our opening request should not be about us but about God.

The second request is also about God and not us.

v. 10a
“Your kingdom come”

I am afraid that far too many Christians, instead of praying “Thy kingdom come,” are praying, “My kingdom come.” Their lips may have it right, they may actually say words to the effect of praying God’s kingdom to come, but their hearts are focused inward. Most of us allow the selfishness and the self-centeredness that is part of being a human rise to the surface and have its will and way in our lives. We want our kingdoms, our worlds, our lives to have the preeminence in all things.

If the word-for-word, thought-for-thought content of your prayers each week were captured on paper and posted on the walls of the church, would a casual observer be able to discern that the desire of your heart is God’s kingdom, or would it reveal that your focus is primarily on your kingdom?

These are hard words I know, but they are words all of us need to hear. If we truly wish to learn from the Master how to pray in a God honoring way, if we truly wish to see divine power in our prayers, and if we desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, then we must get our priorities straight. We must align the focus of our prayers toward God, toward God’s will, toward God’s plans, toward God’s purposes, toward God’s Word, and toward God’s desires. Then and only then will our hearts be in the proper place to make requests on the behalf of others and on our own behalf.

So what does it actually mean for God’s kingdom to come?

The first aspect of God’s kingdom that we need to understand is that it will be on the earth. The request is for His kingdom to come, not that we would leave this place and join Him in His kingdom someplace else. So it will be a kingdom on earth, but it will not be a kingdom of this world.

Turn to **John 18**.

John 18:33-36

“Therefore Pilate again entered into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘I am not a Jew, am

I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You unto me; what have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'"

So what is the distinction between this earth and this world? Our English usage of these two terms is most often interchangeable, but Jesus first of all did not converse in the English language, and secondly did not use the terms in an interchangeable way. When He refers to this earth He is speaking of the physical planet. When He speaks of this world He is referring to sovereignties, domains, realms, spheres of influence, etc., He is not speaking of geography.

At the beginning of **John 18:36**, when Jesus first says, "**My kingdom is not of this world,**" He uses the Greek word, "*kosmos*." And while this word has a very broad meaning, its primary use is to mean the physical earth or even the physical universe. At the end of the verse, when Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this realm," He uses the Greek word, "*enteuthen*." This word simply means this place. The NASB probably has captured the essence of what that last phrase means by using the word realm.

So what does that mean? It simply means that the kingdom of God is not like the earthly kingdoms we live in and are familiar with. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. And while it will also be a literal kingdom on this earth it is not a political kingdom as we know them today.

As we sit here tonight, the world in which we live in the kingdom of Satan. And while Satan can do absolutely nothing apart from God's allowance, God has given him a great measure of latitude and freedom. With this freedom, Satan has been propagating the same lies, the same tricks, the same temptations, and has been using the same devices to deceive mankind into ignoring, rejecting, or not believing in God.

The Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**, "**And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**"

Satan is the god of this world. It is his dominion at the present time and it is his system of politics, his system of chaos, his system of morals, his system of corruption, his system of degradation, and even his system of religion that permeates this world. Right now, this world is Satan's kingdom.

So is it any wonder that we are witness to unimaginable moral decline in this nation and in this world? Is it any wonder that a moral, God-fearing president is attacked at every corner, and lied about and slandered in the media that is dominated by those under Satan's control? Is it any wonder that Christians are being persecuted and killed in greater numbers than at any time in history throughout this world just because they stand up and name the name of Jesus Christ?

Satan may know that his days are numbered and he may know he has absolutely no chance to defeat God, but he has a great measure of dominion and control in this world right now and he is going to use that to his advantage in any and every way he can while it is still his.

So then the second aspect of "**Your kingdom come**" we need to understand is that the prayer is urgent. The Greek word and tense used for the word come indicates a sudden and instantaneous coming.

Matthew 24:27 says, "**For just as lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.**"

The return of Christ to set up His kingdom on this earth will be sudden, and our prayer is to be to that effect. Our prayers should be of such intensity that if Christ did return in the midst of our prayer it would not surprise us. We should believe that Jesus Christ can come back at any moment and that He will come back at any moment.

Turn with me to **Revelation 20**.

Revelation 20:4-6

"Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

Beloved, there will be two resurrections. The first resurrection will be for the benefit of those who will be part of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. All who are genuine Christians, all those who have confessed Jesus as the Lord of their life and have truly believed that God raised Him from the dead, will rule and reign with Jesus in His kingdom.

Now let me ask you something: If given the choice right this very second of continuing on with your life – even a life of ease and prosperity – or stepping into Christ's kingdom right now, which would you choose?

If you had to think about it, you have a problem in your understanding of God and His kingdom. If you had to think about it, you cannot genuinely pray as Jesus is teaching us to pray. If you had to think about it, you are lying when you pray or even repeat the words, **"Thy kingdom come."**

How can any Christian in their right mind even need a moment to ponder the choice between staying in Satan's kingdom and moving on to Christ's kingdom?

I'll tell you how it can happen; it can happen when you have fallen for the enemy's deception. It can happen when you have become enamored with the material goods of this world. It can happen when you get wrapped up in the things of this life, and the passions and the lusts and the temptations of fulfilling the desires of your flesh. It can happen when you accumulate material wealth in over abundance and become comfortable with feeding a hedonistic lifestyle. And while you may think calling it hedonistic is a bit over the top, compare even the lifestyle of those who are considered poor in this country with that of 90% of the rest of the world's population. They would call us hedonistic if they knew what it meant.

The Apostle John warns us, **"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (1 John 2:15-16).**

So when we pray and ask God for His kingdom to come, and to come now, we are telling Him that we are not holding onto this life or anything in it. We are telling God that we do not love this world. We are telling God that we are living our lives in such a way that we are ready for His kingdom to come. We are being obedient to His Word and we are witnessing to those around us and we are claiming new ground for His kingdom every day in the lives of people.

"Your kingdom come"

The Apostle John closes the entire Bible with these words: **"Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (Revelation 22:20b-21)**.

Let's pray.