



The Anglican Parish of Whangaparaoa Peninsula
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Sermon

Your Kingdom Come

Psalm 145:1-21; Colossians 1:9-14; Luke 11:1-4, 12:22-34

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Luke 11:1-4 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." ² He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

The Lord's Prayer is written in Matthew's and Luke's gospels. In Matthew's lead up to it, Jesus said, "When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." ¹

The Nature of the Lord's prayer.

We can see it is not a rote prayer - just words to say and nothing more - because of his contrast to pagan's prayer which consists of babbling many words. It is not so much a literal prayer as a series of headlines for us to fill in with relevant detail as the current needs arise. It is useful for us to memorise and use in a fixed form to get it well-established in our minds so it is readily available for us to use. But then it can be expanded as needed in various areas.

This is a community prayer – it is in the plural – it is not focused on the individual but the community of believers praying with and for each other: **Our** Father, give **us our** bread, forgive **us our** sins, etc.

Last week, you considered the first portion, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Today we move on to "Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Purpose of Prayer

People sometimes ask why should we pray? If God knows our thoughts, why should we ask? If he is Almighty, what is the point in asking since he can do what he wants anyway?

¹ Matthew 6:7-8

From this portion we may gain an insight into the answer to this question. Jesus has said, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." So it is not about information.

If we are to pray, "let your will be done," it is not about arm-twisting God to get him to do what we want either. But he wants us to ask him to do his will. That means he wants or needs or agreement. And if the creator needs something it is because he has chosen to need it. God has given us free will and honours that gift. So he invites us to ask him to do what he wants to do. He has also given the human race authority over planet earth and he respects that authority. Therefore, he wants us to ask him to intervene, so our freewill and authority are respected and honoured. What a privilege!

What is God's kingdom?

What is God's kingdom? It is where God's will is obeyed. It is not a geographical area but those parts of creation, those individuals submitted to his will. John the Baptist and Jesus both announced it was near. Before then, it had been longed for and expected when the Messiah came to rule. But Jesus explained it in different terms. The Kingdom has not fully come yet – that will be accomplished when Jesus returns in power. Yet the Kingdom has partially come as various people enter it through salvation and continue to obey God in their walk with him. So the kingdom is already here yet has not fully come.

Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God in many parables. Remember he likened the spread of the Kingdom to the influence of yeast in dough. In another, he compared its growth to a tiny seed becoming a great tree giving shelter to many birds. So as we ask for God's Kingdom to come, we are not denying what has already developed on earth. We are asking that his Kingdom would continue to grow and extend. We are also looking to the last days when Jesus will return in great power and his rule will be universal.

In Jesus' ministry, the Kingdom was inaugurated with power in signs, wonders, healings and deliverances as God's rule was pushing back Satan's occupation of planet earth. Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and do the same. In Luke's gospel, the Lord's prayer appears in chapter 11, just after Jesus has commissioned and sent out the apostles in chapter 9 to preach the Kingdom of God, to heal the sick and to drive out all demons and cure all diseases. That is extending the kingdom.

In Luke 10:8-9, Jesus sent out 72 others with the command, "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'" That is preaching the Kingdom of God and demonstrating it with spiritual power.

Helen and I have just returned from our annual leave. We chose to go to Brazil to be part of a ministry team under Pastor Randy Clark. We were in a team of 85 people ministering in large churches of 4,000 to 10,000 people! During the ten days we saw many, many healings, many people filled with the Holy Spirit, many people freed and rejoicing in the reality of God's presence and power – the Kingdom of God was advancing.

We are not saying that the only way the Kingdom is extended is by healing and deliverance but it is still an important demonstration of the reality of God's rule. Others include: people coming to salvation, lives being changed from destructive patterns to godly paths. In fact, it might best be expressed in the manifesto of the Kingdom stated by Jesus:

Luke 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

The Psalm we heard read (145) tells us of the nature of the kingdom which flows from the nature of the King;

¹³⁻¹⁹ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving towards all he has made. The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving towards all he has made. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

That gives us an idea of what things are like when God rules:

- He is faithful to his promises
- He loves all he has made.
- He upholds those who fall.
- He lifts up those who are bowed down.
- He provides sustenance.
- He is near to those who call upon him in truth.
- He fulfills the desires of those who fear him and saves them.

How important is this kingdom?

In the gospel passage, Jesus speaks practically of the basic needs we have for food, clothing and shelter. And he tell us not to worry about these but make the Kingdom of God our first priority. If we seek to obey God and promote his rule, Jesus says the Father will give us what we need as well – because it is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

Seek first the Kingdom of God!

God's will:

After the request, “Let your kingdom come,” the related one is “let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

We are praying to our Father who is the creator and almighty ruler. He is not **a** king but **the** King.

Do you know that it is illegal to say, ‘No,’ to our Sovereign, the Queen? If she asks a subject to do something, the answer must be: ‘Yes.’ That means, out of courtesy, Buckingham Palace goes to some trouble to find whether an honour would be accepted before it is announced, whether an invitation is convenient before the formal invitation is made – because the recipient cannot say ‘No.’

When we deal with the Almighty, “No, Lord!” is an oxymoron – a contradiction. The only answer is “Yes, Lord!” “Let your will be done!”

Jesus modelled this for us in his life and ministry. "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."² Most powerfully, we see him at Gethsemane, facing the horror of the crucifixion and praying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."³

In Colossians 1, Paul wrote, “... we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding ...”

What does Paul say is the result of knowing and following the will of God?

- you live a life worthy of the Lord
- you please him in every way:
- you bear fruit in every good work,
- you grow in the knowledge of God,
- you are strengthened with all power according to his glorious might
- you have great endurance and patience,
- you joyfully give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

So we have a challenge: Are we prepared to trust God enough to request his will to be done? Do we want his kingdom or is it ours that we want to prevail?

² John 5:19

³ Luke 22:42

What will you take into this week with you? A desire to see God's rule expressed in the world around you, even through you to people you meet?

A longing for his good, pleasing and perfect will to be working out in our church, our relationships, our community?

Will you pray prayers like this:

- "Use me, Lord."
- "Let your kingdom come, here and now."
- "Come Lord Jesus and bring in your kingdom."
- "Let your will be done as fully and well and perfectly as it is in heaven."