

Title: Your Kingdom Come
Date: August 8, 2021
Subject: Christians should pray to advance God's kingdom and do his will
Scripture: Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2

John Crowe's daughter's family moved to Del Rio, Texas. One night his 4-year-old granddaughter recited the Lord's Prayer with a slight variation; "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Texas." (2011 August Mature Living). Wonder how she phrased the rest of the prayer. Glad she had a good opinion of Texas. Though it's not exactly what God has in mind.

So far in our study of The Disciples' Prayer, we've looked at Paternity - our Father, and the Person of God as revealed in his name. Now we turn to God's Program.

Our focus will be in Matthew 6: 10. Let's get the whole prayer in mind.

<<< Say the prayer together. Since there are many different wordings, the words are on the screen.

The kingdom problem. The questions that arise include: Whose kingdom are we going to build? Will it be our kingdom or God's kingdom? Will it be our interests or God's interests? Will God be King or will we be king?

People have rejected the Lord's kingdom for as long as we've been around. Adam and Eve were convinced by the devil they should be in charge of their lives. Didn't work out so well. They became sinners, came under the curse of death, lost their intimate relationship with the Father and were kicked out of the Garden.

Babel. The folks there were interested in erecting a tower that reached to the heavens (Genesis 11). They wanted to build their kingdom, make a name for themselves, show how important they were. Didn't turn out so well either. God confused their language and scattered them.

When Jesus, the Son of God himself, came to earth, he wasn't exactly warmly received. The attitude of most people is revealed in this telling Scripture: "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:10, 11). They wanted to maintain their kingdoms.

Not to mention the devil who started it all by staging a revolt because he said, "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

The kingdom problem gets more personal as discussed by Trevin Wax on Family Life Radio this past Tuesday on a broadcast titled *God's Dreams Are Bigger*. He stated, "Most people look at the purpose of life as: *'You need to look inside yourself to then find and express yourself.'*" So you: "Look *in* first to discover who you are, to find out what your deepest desires are; then you look *around* to the people around you to affirm you, to support you, and to cheer you on in that self that you have constructed; and then, if you feel like you need to, you look *up* to God or to some higher power for inspiration in your life, some sort of spiritual dimension."

He'd started the conversation on the Monday program: "the slogans and the sort of pithy phrases that have so captured our imaginations, like: "Be true to yourself," "Follow your heart," "Chase your dreams," "You do you," "No matter what anyone else says, be yourself," all of those kinds of phrases and things that you do hear...the graduation speeches and other inspirational talks, or in movies, television shows."

It's like Jesse Watters on the Fox News Network. His schtick is to wave his arm in front of him and say, "I'm Watters...and this is my world." He says it with a cheesy smile, but a lot of people proudly feel that way: "I'm so and so... and this is my world."

One more. The August edition of the Church Connection from Wisconsin Family Council is in the bulletin. Dave Lingle, the Church Ambassador, wrote an accompanying note about how the world wants to squeeze us into their mold (Romans 12:1 - 2). "We are living in an autonomous age. It isn't unique to us, though. When we read the book of Judges we were reminded that "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The results were not good. We cannot escape the consequences of seeking to live autonomously any more than the Israelites of old could. We need to remind ourselves - and the culture - that we are created beings [Genesis 1:1ff (cf. Psalms 139:13 - 16)]. We are finite and limited. We cannot create our own reality, and we rebel against God and his creation to our own temporal and eternal loss." The Church Connection applies this attitude to various issues in our country. It begins by saying "Reality is revealed in the opening statement of the inerrant, unchanging, eternal Word of God: "*In the beginning God...*" It's not "*In the beginning I.*"

What is the kingdom? It has several aspects. The kingdom of God/heaven is used over 100 times in the Gospels. It has various meanings – the eternal, universal rule and reign of God, the kingdom as expressed through Jesus on earth, the spiritual expression of God ruling and reigning in the lives of believers and the future ultimate fulfillment.

Jesus taught about each of these aspects of the kingdom. He picked up the baton from John the Baptist to proclaim, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mark 1:15). John's preaching had been to point to Jesus coming as the King (Matthew 3:2). Jesus used the message to indicate he was sent by the Father to preach the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43, 8:1). The Savior also spoke of the kingdom's presence within or among people (Luke 17:21) as well as pointing to the future fulfillment (Acts 1:6, 7). He told Pilate his kingdom wasn't of this world but from another place (John 18:36, 37).

Jesus spoke of the close connection of the kingdom and the church (Matthew 16:18, 19). They aren't one and the same. The kingdom is God's all-encompassing enterprise for all those who are rightly related to him. It includes people like Noah and Abraham, who were before the establishment of the Jewish people group. It includes Moses, Elijah, Daniel—Jews who trusted in the Lord. It includes the church -- people who are followers of Jesus Christ. There is some overlapping now when it comes to Messianic Jews, Jewish followers of Christ.

The future kingdom will take care of itself. It will be perfect. "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever" (Revelation 11:15). Though Jesus is the

King of kings, he will submit as Son to Father. Scripture tells us: “Then the end will come, when he (Christ) hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24 - 28). We can live in anticipation of the future kingdom and prepare for it now.

Our chief concern is God’s rule and reign in the lives of people in the here and now. To participate in it, a person has to be in it. Entrance into the kingdom is only through a person placing their personal trust in the completed work of Christ – his death and payment for their sins. Jesus told parables about the kingdom. In two of his shortest, he declared the kingdom is so valuable a person should be willing to give up all they have to gain it (Matthew 13:44 – 46).

That’s the first component. The second is for those in the kingdom to grow in their relationship with God the Father and to help other people grow in their spiritual lives. The Son of God tells us later in the same chapter where The Disciples’ Prayer is found: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (6:33). This is prefaced by reminding us how the pagans run after money, earthly treasures and stuff, lots and lots of stuff. They pursue what their desires crave in order to pad their kingdom.

The kingdom of God means he’s the One who is in charge. He decides what are the priorities. He declares the values. He gets to give the marching orders as to the attitudes and actions of his followers.

We are the followers. His concerns are to be our concerns. Our purpose is to live for God. Scripture says, “And he (Jesus Christ) died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

One man put the choice succinctly: “Before we can pray, 'Thy kingdom come', we must be willing to pray, 'My kingdom go’” (Alan Redpath).

After we’ve decided the issue...and continue to decide the issue...as we often try to push God off the throne in our lives, we need to flesh out our role in establishing, advancing and building the kingdom of God. How do we participate?

As builders of the kingdom, we’re to seek to bring people into the kingdom, to Christ as Savior as they’re ambassadors of the King trying to bring people into reconciliation with the King (2 Corinthians 5:18 – 20). Share the good news with family, friends, fellow students and co-workers.

We’re to build into people’s lives using God’s Word and prayer. We’re to employ the one another commands. Seek to utilize our spiritual gifting to build up the body (Ephesians 4:11 – 14).

This next illustration is long but the more I dug, the more I found. Mark Hall of Casting Crowns gave background to the song Only Jesus: (christianpost.com/news/casting-crowns-mark-hall-christians-live-upside-down-bible-heroes-never-aimed-leave-legacy-227519/?v=VXIBP2BdYR8). "We're living in a time of making a

name for ourselves, and being known, and how do we want to be remembered, and what's our legacy going to be? But when you look at Scripture, no hero of the faith ever set out to be one. No leader ever got up and said, 'I want to be a leader today. I want to be a hero today. I want to have followers today... Everyone in scripture that we pattern our life after got up every morning and said, 'You're first Jesus. What do you want? What is your will?' Not 'What is your will for my life?' Not, 'What can you do for me and how can you bless what I'm doing?' But they got up and said, 'God, what are you doing today? I want in.'"

He alluded to Biblical people who redirected the spotlight when someone tried to elevate them -- John the Baptist who said he was just a voice crying out in the wilderness, and Paul who described himself as the chief of sinners while pointing to Jesus. Both of them did.

Hall continues, "It just reminds me that when I get up in the morning God already has a plan, and this is His story. I'm a part of His story," Hall declared. "So I've got to focus myself on Scripture and on truth so that when I get out into the world, I'm like, 'Alright God, how can I show them what you're doing?'"

"I don't need to leave a legacy. I don't need to be remembered. People remembering me isn't going to help them. There's only so far I can take you. You'll just walk away going, 'Why, I can I be like that guy.' But if I do like Paul did and say, 'Here's what you need to know about me. I've got every kind of struggle and failure in my path. I got nothing going for me. You don't need to pay attention to me at all. I'll lead you the wrong way. You need to look to Jesus.' That's my reminder that Jesus is the only name to remember!"

Here are some of the words to the song Only Jesus which begins with the voices from the world: "Dream your dreams, chase your heart, above all else. Make a name the world remembers. But all an empty world can sell is empty dreams. I got lost in the light when it was up to me, To make a name the world remembers. But Jesus is the only name to remember. And I don't want to leave a legacy. I don't care if they remember me. Only Jesus. And I've only got one life to live. I'll let every second point to Him. Only Jesus. All the kingdoms built, all the trophies won, Will crumble into dust, when it's said and done. 'Cause all that really mattered: Did I live the truth to the ones I love? Was my life the proof that there is only One, Whose name will last forever?... Jesus is the only name to remember."

That may hit us right between the eyes. People won't remember me or my contributions?

The founder of our denomination (A.B. Simpson) wrote many songs about the position and priority Jesus Christ is to have in our lives including this one: "Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted; Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard; Not I, but Christ, in every look and action; Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word. Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord, Oh, to be lost in Thee; Oh, that it may be no more I, But Christ that lives in me."

John the Baptist's followers came to him with a complaint. Jesus was gaining more followers - "everyone is going to him." "You won't have anybody left. You should be upset." John wasn't concerned. He knew who truly mattered and that he was secondary to Jesus. He said Jesus must become greater and he must become less (John 3:30).

Kingdom suggests war. I suppose now is as good a time as any to remind us we're not only in a war but we're fighting behind enemy lines. Three times Jesus referred to the devil as the prince of this world, meaning the world system and life on this earth (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). As we'd expect the human writers who were recording God's words followed suit in their assessments. The devil is referred to as the "God of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). "The whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12).

It sounds like a daunting task. But before we start to get any unnecessary jitters, we need this important reminder: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, (false prophets, spirit of antichrist, false spirits, the forces of evil) because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

John Piper has this in mind when he writes, "So what is prayer for? *For war and wartime, not for civilian life.* The primary reason prayer malfunctions in the hands of believers is their insistence on trying to take a wartime walkie-talkie and turn it into a domestic intercom. A tool made for tanks and trenches won't work when you install it in your yacht or the lake cabin or the second, third, or fourth car" (*Mission Frontiers*, June/July, 1989, p. 16). He advocates if we're not engaged in spiritual battle, we shouldn't expect kingdom equipment to work.

Someone else commented about praying for the Father's kingdom to come: "Along these lines, we pray for the spread of the gospel and the establishment of the rule and reign of the Father in the hearts of men and women. We pray for the welfare of the distressed and oppressed. We pray for physical healing, deliverance, change of hearts, broken relationships, and such things as would change with an acceptance of the Father and His ways. We also look forward to Jesus' return to live and rule among us."

Frances Grubbs, "We requisition that the power and potency of the sovereign King of the universe be brought to bear upon this specific object of our prayer. If the prayer is directed to the internal conflict within the child of God's (originally *son's*) own life, he is requesting that Christ's kingship overrule self and Satan for mastery. If he is praying for another, he is requesting that the Holy Spirit of power defeat Satan's rule and instate the kingship of Jesus Christ" (Francis W. Grubbs, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*, p. 31). Grubbs goes into more specifics as he applies this to praying for people don't know Christ as Savior. I put that in the sermon notes.

I intended to get to "Your will be done." Next week. Not that we put off doing his will till next week like how people talk about diets and starting them tomorrow, but...

We pray for the salvation of people, for those in a right relationship with the Lord to obey his will, for Christ's return and his eternal rule on earth and heaven.