

## “Thy Kingdom come” – The Prayer that changes the world!

Who has ever wanted to pray God’s Word, Jesus’ words for his very own disciples, words that have what we call some real grunt that come with them when you speak them aloud, even together in faith and belief? Well here they are. **Matthew 6:9-10 (NIVUK)**

<sup>9</sup> *‘This, then, is how you should 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.*

In the first section of the Lord’s Prayer after praying, “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name” as we did during communion this morning, giving glory to our immortal God in heaven, as his mortal people on earth, standing before him in reverent fear and awe. We arrive at what is the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, as the old KJV language puts it ‘Thy Kingdom come’.

Jesus told his disciples, which includes us today, to pray for God’s kingdom to come. So what does that mean?

Well, one thing is for certain: to pray it apart from all the courage you can muster would be failing to understand what you are praying. Particularly concerning God’s complete and total authority and sovereignty over all.

Which is utter Boldness indeed. To speak these words is to...

‘invite the tiger out of the cage’, to unleash a power that makes the blast of an atomic bomb look like a light warm breeze.

It’s true. When we pray, we are to pray for God’s kingdom, God’s *will*, to not only come into our lives and take root, but through us, to spread throughout the earth. God’s kingdom was announced by Jesus, and makes its way into the world from that beachhead as individuals give their hearts and lives to Christ.

In that sense, as we’ve prayed ‘Thy Kingdom come’ It has arrived, and we have been brought into that kingdom as believers.

‘Thy Kingdom Come’ are the very words given to the global initiative of the same name, in which Christians are invited to pray for God’s Spirit to move within the Church, equipping us to share God’s love with others and to pay attention to how God is speaking to us today. As an illustration, from the history of the Methodist Church this movement of prayer coincides with the 280th anniversary of, John Wesley’s Aldersgate experience where he felt his heart “strangely warmed”, and an assurance of God’s love and

of personal salvation. John Wesley's experience at the Aldersgate meeting transformed his belief and preaching from a mere nominal believer, because the kingdom of God came into Wesley's life in a powerful way, it took over and reigned in every part of his life, ultimately leading to the formation of the Methodist Church.

[To mark the coming of the kingdom into John Wesley's life on 24th May 1738, he wrote in his journal:

*"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in **Aldersgate Street**, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, **I felt my heart strangely warmed**. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me.]*

Aldersgate is not just about the past, or just about John Wesley. His experience, so memorably and vividly expressed in his journal, demonstrates both that our faith does not rest on our feelings but on the promises of a faithful God and the difference it makes knowing God for ourselves. So that when we least expect it, even when things haven't turned out the way we hoped or when we feel we've heard it all before, there can be change. Change happens when we share the story. Wesley experienced this when someone else read to him Martin Luther's Preface to Romans. We too are called to share the story, to refresh our faith and to inspire others.

Early Methodism focused on spreading the gospel to all, especially those 'neglected' by the Church of the day. Salvation by faith was preached to individuals and groups, in houses and churches, and in the open air. We stand in that same tradition of the proclamation of the faith; that is the work of God in us. So today we pray...

'Thy kingdom come' and as a part of the global initiative we are encouraged to make a list of 1-5 people who we will commit to pray every day for between Ascension Day Thursday May 10<sup>th</sup> and Pentecost Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup>

'Thy kingdom come' Do you believe in the life transforming power of God's word spoken in faith from the heart of a believer?

My mate Nevin down in Mosgiel did. Nevin's story begins with his very wild and rebellious cousin who was two years ahead of us in high school. Mitch was his name and he had come to the LORD in a dramatic way as a 19 year old. From which time he began praying for Nevin and witnessing to him on a regular basis until he

received Christ. Nevin started fellowshipping with Christians but still hung out with all his unsaved mates which wasn't always good for his newly found faith, Christ had rule over a lot, but not all the areas of his life. But that didn't stop Nevin writing down in his diary one day, three names stating "these guys really need to know you God". He personalised in prayer and prayed individually for these three, "Lord this person needs you. Come into their lives" I was one of the names on his list. Up until now it has been one down, two to go. That won't stop him praying for the other two.

Praying for God's kingdom to come does not mean we must literally say, "God, may your kingdom come." When we pray for the conversion of others, we are praying for them to bow willingly to Christ's rule; so it's in this way we pray for His kingdom to come. I wonder who was praying for John Wesley when he unwillingly went to the Aldersgate meeting but ended up submitting to Christ and experiencing the warm joyful glow of the spirit in him.

Jesus is using the kingdom of heaven here to refer specifically to that realm where people do His will freely and joyfully. Because God's will is done freely and joyfully in this kingdom. God's name is regarded as holy by the kingdom's citizens. Our Father, of course, is King of creation, but this reign is not yet universally acknowledged. In fact the opposite is true.

We need to be careful that the Lord's Prayer does not become something that we regularly say as a memorised habit, without thought or truly pleading from the heart, because the reality is that these words become a divine force unleashing God's blessing. Now, you could pray "Thy kingdom come" without any regard for the intent of Jesus, or you can pray "**Thy kingdom come**" and the world itself begins to change... Now that is the power for daily living that you and I are looking for. But how is "Thy kingdom come" a prayer that literally changes the world?

### **1. The Kingdom of God Is Divine**

*The kingdom of God is the reign of God.* The word for kingdom is taken from *basileia*, the word for king, and simply means "the reign of the king." It means all of the territory of His realm. And even more importantly, the authority of the Sovereign ruler. The king is God; His territory includes the whole cosmos. But the question of the ages is this: Is your life part of the territory and under the authority, the rule and reign of this King?

It is important to remember that the kingdom of God with Jesus' appearance made a giant leap forward, but it has always existed. God has always been on the throne. *So says Psalm 103:19*  
*"The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,*  
*and his kingdom rules over all".*

Wherever God is, there is His rule and reign. And do you know what? If you or any other individual will not submit to His rule and reign, the kingdom of God still exists. If you resist the Spirit of God who is moving upon your heart, the kingdom of God will still exist and the purposes of God Almighty will still advance and go forward in the world. There's no stopping the divine King's rule and reign of the Cosmos, no matter what you think, say or do.

God ruled through creation. The heavens obeyed Him, even when humanity did not. The beasts of the earth, the winds and waves and the heavenly bodies obeyed Him. God ruled! God was working all things together for our good in specially preparing a people, the Hebrews/Jews, to bring forth the Messiah for the world. So the person who prays "Thy kingdom come" is surrendering their will to the reign of God in their life. Just as John Wesley did, just as I did, just as you did as a believer. Now if you haven't done that yet, then it is something that I hope will happen for you.

This prayer changes the world through a conviction that God must be glorified in your heart, and, in the hearts of others. Just as our church motto says 'Bringing glory to God in worship and life'.

This is the first way in which 'Thy kingdom come' is a prayer that literally changes the world. Secondly, I must point out that...

## **2. The Kingdom of God Is Opposed**

*There are two kingdoms at work in the world.*

Paul wrote, "For 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

The devil, satan, or Lucifer as he is known is said to be the ruler of this world. We are not saying that Christ is not King of kings and Lord of lords or that His sovereignty is in any way diminished.

We are only admitting that there is another kingdom.

And they are at war with each other. Ever since Satan/Lucifer fell like lightning from heaven he brought his diabolical schemes into humanity, it has been evident that there is a struggle.

In Noah's day, there were two kingdoms, and God called Noah to build an Ark that would float the kingdom of God through the

judgment on the kingdom of Satan. Noah preached righteousness, but the whole human race chose the kingdom of Satan over the kingdom of God and was judged. It was the same for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament representing a city of fallen humanity that was subsequently destroyed by fire and brimstone after the righteous family of Lot had escaped from it.

So if there is a struggle in your heart today; perhaps there is an area or territory which remains unclaimed by Christ that is not under his rule and reign, even as a child of God. Though Satan cannot have your soul, he seeks that one territory or area of your life to hold. But Jesus is the bondage breaker. The kingdom of God is greater than the kingdom of Satan. Christ calls each of us in our own life to turn from it and run and submit it to Him.

Will you accept the challenge. If there is such an area of your life not submitted to God, would you turn in repentance today and be free from sin and the devils hold on you? Try it now, turn away from this area of sin in your life and pray to God, Thy Kingdom Come! This is how this prayer changes the course of individual lives and the very course of the world because, thirdly,

### **3. The Kingdom of God Is Missional**

In that The kingdom of God comes to destroy the kingdom of Satan. Paul believed the gospel was at work in the world destroying Satan's kingdom.

*"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet..."* Romans 16:20.

The Bible also tells us, *"...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8).

To wrap up, Jesus who is now in us ruling and reigning over our lives does so because he sits on the throne, not just in heaven but in our hearts, as we willingly and joyfully submit to him and pray 'Thy Kingdom come!'

If it's happened for you as a child of God and a disciple of Christ then you know it can change the life of another, and change the world one life at a time, as you pray for them 'Thy Kingdom come!'