From the Pulpit of Keith Miller
Meadowbrooke Church
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"Your kingdom come…"

Matthew 6:9-13

Introduction

When I began this sermon series, I said that I believe that when Christians find their moral center, then perhaps we will begin to experience the kind of transformative power the Church in Acts experienced in the first century in our day today. I told you that the Sermon on the Mount is the center that we Christians are called too. The Sermon on the Mount is a picture of what discipleship really looks like. There are only two ways to read and understand the Sermon on the Mount: It is the ideal that exposes our sin in light of what the perfect life looks like, a life that none of us are able to really obey. Or, the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Jesus so that we would live to obey it.

While in Arizona for a conference two weeks ago, someone whom I told I was preaching through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, recommended a little book on the Sermon on the Mount, titled, *What if Jesus Was Serious?* by Skye Jethani. In his book, he said of those who think the Sermon on the Mount is idealistic and not meant to be taken seriously: "Jesus must have preached this sermon while frequently winking at His disciples to communicate, 'Don't worry. You don't have to take any of this seriously.'"[1] Jesus followed the ideals of his own sermon, and then told us to follow him. Was he a fool for doing so? "Love your enemies." "Turn the other cheek." "Go the extra mile." Jesus was a man of his word and followed his own ideals to a wooden instrument of death and died there on a cross.

In the opening pages of his book, Jethani offers the following advice to evangelical Christians like us: "We who claim to be Jesus' followers and seek a life shaped by His kingdom hold the antidote to the division and anger that is poisoning our culture. If we want the culture to take Jesus more seriously, maybe we should try it first. After that, if the culture still rejects Christians and our message, at least it will be for the right reason."[2]

So why did Jesus provide us with a model for our prayer life that includes the request that his kingdom come down to earth? We will look at the third petition next week, which states: …**your will be done.**" However, the reason we should pray for the coming of God's kingdom is because it is his will that it be so. In Luke 12:32, Jesus said to his disciples: "**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**."

What is the Kingdom of God that We are Praying For?

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God over all things and Jesus is the King who will rule over that kingdom. But what is the Kingdom of God? When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate

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[1] Skye Jethani, *What if Jesus was Serious?* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers; 2020), p. 10.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 12.

moments before he would be crucified, Pilate asked him, "**Are you the King of the Jews**" (John 18:33)? Jesus answered: *"***My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world**" (John 18:36). So, the kingdom we pray to come down to earth is at least two things according to Jesus: (1) It is not of this world, and (2) it is spiritual, not political.

When we pray, we are to pray for one type of kingdom to come, and that kingdom is the one that is God's alone. When we read of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, we are given some idea of what kind of kingdom we are to pray for. In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue that represented four significant and powerful empires. The statue represented four empires that would all come and go with the final and greatest of the kingdoms meeting its demise with the coming of a kingdom not of this earth. Daniel interpreted the king's dream and said the following: "**And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever**…" (Daniel 2:44). America shares the same fate of the empires that have gone before her; no kingdom on earth will last or endure. The kingdom we pray to come is the only one that will endure forever and ever.

The stone that Nebuchadnezzar saw destroy the empires of the earth is King Jesus who will rule and reign on earth over the Kingdom of God. Of Jesus and his kingdom, we read in Psalm 2:6-8, "**'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession**". The prophet Isaiah foretold of Jesus: "**Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this**" (Isaiah 9:7). This is why at Jesus' birth, the angel said to the shepherds on the first Christmas: "**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" (Luke 2:11).

The apostle John wrote of the day when Jesus comes to establish the kingdom of God on earth: "**Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him**" (Rev. 1:7). The apostle Paul said of our savior: "…**at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and one earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**" (Phil. 2:10-11).

The kingdom of God will be physical and it will be on earth. When the kingdom of God comes, we are promised: "**What is mortal will be swallowed up by life**" (see 2 Cor. 5:4). It will be the place where God, "**will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore**" (Rev. 21:4). If you are a Christian, our experience will be in a kingdom where worship of God will be central, Jesus will be honored, and all of its citizens will know a joy unparalleled to anything ever experienced in this lifetime.

The kingdom that we pray will come down, is a kingdom where the curse of sin is not permitted, goodbye will be unnecessary, and boredom… inconceivable. We pray for a reality that all creation groans for, the demons flee from, the angels long to look, and the place the Christian was redeemed for.

Earth will not be the earth as we know it today, for God will make it new. The New Earth will not be new in the way you trade in your used car so that you can afford a new one. The new earth will be new in the same way Jesus' resurrected body was new because He was resurrected. The Bible tells us that, "**the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed**" (2 Pet. 3:10).

The kind of "new" the Bible refers to is more like a remodeling of the old. Instead of cleansing the earth with a flood, He will do it through fire. Randy Alcorn, in his book *Heaven*, writes of the coming Day: "The earth's death will be no more final than our own. The destruction of the old earth in God's purifying judgment will immediately be followed by its resurrection to new life. Earth's fiery "end" will open straight into a glorious new beginning."[3]

When God gives us the kingdom fully and completely, He will move His dwelling place from the present heaven to the new earth. God making His dwelling place with man on a new earth is the promise of the kingdom, and is the reason why it is His pleasure to give us His kingdom. On that day all the angels will shout with amazement: "**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God**" (21:3).

On the day the kingdom of God is inherited by the people of God, "**everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away**" (35:10).

What Kind of Kingdom are We Praying For?

In Jesus' prayer, he teaches us to pray for a kingdom where the name of God is hallowed. Remember how the prayer begins: "Our Father…" When we pray, we pray to our heavenly Father who is Elohim, Yahweh, and Adonai. He is the God who creates out of nothing, keeps his covenants and his promises, and he is sovereign. It is his name that the true Christian desires to be hallowed above all things.

Remember that the first petition to hallow God's name is served by the following five petitions. So, when we pray that his kingdom come, we pray that his kingdom come for the hallowing of his name! When we pray that his will be done, we pray that his will be done for the hallowing of his name. When we pray for our "daily bread" we pray that he meet our needs for the hallowing of his name. When we pray for the forgiveness of our sins and the sins of those who have sinned against us, we do so for the hallowing of his name. And when we pray for victory over sin, we do so for the hallowing of his name.

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[3] Randy Alcorn. *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; 2004), p. 157.

When we pray for God's kingdom to come for the hallowing of his name, we are acknowledging where it is that our true citizenship is. Our primary citizenship as a follower of Christ is within a kingdom that is not of this earth. Now listen to what I am about to say very carefully: God's kingdom does not accept or allow dual citizenships. I say this because the apostle Peter described anyone who follows Jesus as "**sojourners and exiles**" in this world, and in light of what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:17-21,

> **Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself**. (Philippians 3:17–21)

When we pray, we must pray with the understanding of what really matters and what will last. All of history is moving in one direction that will culminate in only one outcome: The kingdom of God on earth where what was lost in Eden will be restored, but it will be so much better than the first Eden. This is why the prophet Malachi wrote of the culmination of all human history: "**For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts**" (Mal. 1:11). This is what we ought to long for and this is what we pray for. As one pastor wrote of the Lord's Prayer,

> When you sincerely believe and genuinely confess Christ as Lord, you are confirming that the direction of your life is aimed at His exaltation. Your own causes are valid only insofar as they agree with the eternal causes of God revealed in Christ. When I pray, 'Thy kingdom come," I am saying to God's Holy Spirit, "Spirit of Christ within me, take control and do what You will for Your glory." A true child of God won't be preoccupied with his own plans and desires, but with the determinate program of God, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.[4]

Jesus' prayer serves to put in check our tendency to put ourselves in the center of God's plan. Our hearts tend to gravitate towards self-centeredness where we focus on what we feel we need, plans we created to serve our desires, and aspirations that fall in line with an agenda that serves our own flesh. On this side of eternity, you and I will always struggle with that part of us that wants to be central to God's plans. However, when we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done… for the renown of your name." We remind our fickle hearts that what God wants for us is so much better than what we feel we need, more enduring than our fragile plans, and eternally satisfying compared to our temporal aspirations. Why do we pray for the coming of God's kingdom? The author of Hebrews reminds us: "**For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come**" (Heb. 13:14).

Conclusion

When we pray, "**Your kingdom come, your will be done**…" We remind ourselves that no thing, no person, or no danger, can take what God has promised to the Christian. Remember what Jesus promised in Luke 12:32, "**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good**

[4] John MacArthur, *Alone with God* (Colorado Springs, CO: 2006), p. 83.

pleasure to give you the kingdom." What is interesting is that Jesus shared that it was the pleasure of God to give the Christian his kingdom after he told his disciples: "**Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on…**" (v. 23). Then Jesus continued to say after his promise of the Father's pleasure to give us the kingdom with these words: "**Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**" (Luke 12:33–34).

If we take Jesus' words seriously, and we truly believe that the One whom we call Father is really the God who is able to create out of nothing (Elohim), intends to keep all of his promises (Yahweh), and perfectly governs all things as the Sovereign One (Adonai), then we can live in light of our true citizenship in a kingdom that is not of this earth, that is our true home. I believe that if you take Jesus' words seriously, you will be freed up to do two things:

1. You are now able to hold all that you used to believe was yours with an open hand before a God whose pleasure it is to give you so much more by giving you his kingdom.

2. Because your citizenship as a Christian resides in God's coming kingdom, we are liberated to tell others what can also be theirs if they simply repent from their sins and believe in Jesus as the one who died and rose again so that sinner can be forgiven of their sins.

I read something that Kent Hughs wrote concerning our prayer for God's coming kingdom that was so good, that I believe it is the best way to conclude my sermon this morning:

> When we pray "your kingdom come," we pray for three things. First, we pray for the final and ultimate establishment of God's kingdom. We pray for the day when all creation will freely call Him "Dearest Father" "*Abba*." There is an almost martial, triumphant ring to "your kingdom come." *Come, O Lord!*
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> Second, we pray "your kingdom come" so we will be conformed to his will in this world. As we pray this, we hand ourselves over to the grace of God so he may do with us as he pleases. *Your kingdom come in my life. Use me for your kingdom.*
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> Third, "your kingdom come" is a prayer that God's rule will come to others through us. It is a prayer for Christ to work his revolutionary power in a fallen world. *Your kingdom come in my family, my job, my city, my nation.*[5]

When we pray, we pray for the coming of his kingdom for the renown of his fame, for the purpose of the hallowing of his name in our lives, our city, and in our world. Amen.

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[5] Hughes, R. K. (2001). *The sermon on the mount: the message of the kingdom* (pp. 172–173). Crossway Books.