

The Kingdom of God

In Matthew 6.9-10, we find Jesus saying this:

(Jesus said) "Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.

When we pray this, we're asking God and reminding God about building his physical kingdom on the earth. The Bible tells us that when Jesus returns, he will set up his kingdom on the earth. We're not exactly sure of the specific times, the how and when. But we know this will happen. So when we pray 'your kingdom come', we're praying for Jesus to return and set up this kingdom. God doesn't need us to pray this – Jesus will return anyway – but God enjoys working with us!

Matthew 24.14 tells us that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world – and then the end will come. Want to see the return of Jesus? Preach and commit your life to the gospel of the kingdom!

Secondly, we're also asking God to build his kingdom on the earth now through our lives. Every act, every action, every thoughtful act, every prayer, every encouragement makes a difference and builds God's kingdom. Despite all the evil in the world, the Bible tells us that this kingdom "will never be shaken" (Hebrews 12.28). God's government and rule will never end and is only going to increase (Isaiah 9.7).

A brief look at what the 'Kingdom of God' is – not a movie with Orlando Bloom!

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6.33 to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness – out of this flows everything else. The Bible tells us the kingdom is like a precious pearl that costs everything (Matthew 13). So we know the kingdom is something worth going after!

Romans 14.17 says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Right from the beginning of time, God is a God who wants to be present with his people and is forming a holy people for his presence and to share in his life. God is about relationship with his people. The Bible tells us that the Lord walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam. Now God lives in the hearts of those who believe in him by the Holy Spirit. So God works and walks with us but he also works in us to change us to be more like him. As your life changes to be more like Jesus, this is evidence of God's kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven!

Luke 17.20-21 – Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He replied, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed or with a visible display; nor will people say, ‘Look! Here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For the kingdom of God is among you [because of My presence].”

So God’s kingdom is about God’s purposes being done in and through his people (the church). When we do what God wants, obey his Word and do things like loving others, doing acts of justice, praying for people and telling people about Jesus – this is evidence of God’s kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven.

The question we always have to ask is “what does God’s kingdom look like in heaven?” When we think about what that looks like, we have an idea of what God’s kingdom looks like on earth. We also look at the life of Jesus on the earth and the things he did. Jesus only did what he knew God his Father wanted him to and the kinds of things that God does. So when we look at what Jesus did, we know the kinds of things that we should do in building God’s kingdom.

So where we work with God and let God work through us, God’s kingdom comes – in us and through us! Every act of being humble, forgiving, loving others with God’s love, act of kindness, every act of obeying God, of giving and sacrifice. Every time we tell people about Jesus, this is the kingdom coming.

Building God’s kingdom (the church) becomes even more effective if we’re rightly aligned. As I felt God said – the right thing, in the right place, at the right time, in the right way, with the right people, being rightly aligned with God and each other.

The life of Jesus as our example

God’s kingdom is seen in the life of Jesus. A brilliant place to see this summarised is in Acts 10.38

“...How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with great power; and He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.”

Let’s also look at John 6.38:

(Jesus said), “ For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.”

Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit – so are we if we believe in Jesus and have said yes to him in our lives. Ephesians 1.19-20 tells us that the same power that raised Jesus lives in us – that power is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a ‘great power’ (another Bible under-statement!) as he is God in spirit form. Jesus also told his disciples and us in John 14.12 that we would do the things that Jesus did – and greater works too.

So we know that Jesus went around the place – he got involved with people, work, life. But he didn’t wander around without a purpose. He was always doing God’s business. If you’ve ever been involved with the military or have friends or family that have, you’ll know that while you’re working, you are under command.

You have a job to do and can be called to do something at any time. You live with a purpose. Jesus was like this but it wasn't work for him – his heart was always to do his Father's will – God's will. That should be our heart too.

Jesus went around doing good – that's God-good not world-good. Often people think about the word 'good' and apply it to all kinds of things. But Jesus did what was right and good. The good that Jesus did was also visible – people could see, hear and touch it. When Jesus healed people and helped people get free from evil, it was very real and it was obvious. As Christians, we build God's kingdom by doing small hidden things and things that bring glory to God that others can see. Jesus said that we should let our good deeds shine out so people see them and glorify God. We don't do things to draw attention to ourselves – but people need to see the goodness of God! People are walking around lost and without hope and Jesus is the answer.

In the life of Jesus, no-one that wanted his help went without their healing or their touch from God – whether it was coming to know Jesus, physical healing or miracles. Only those that resisted Jesus went without. Again, this should be our plan. We don't know why not everyone gets healed. It is a mystery. But we know that God's heart is to heal, set free and to save all. We know this because that's what happened with Jesus.

The New Life Version of the Bible says this from 2 Peter 3.9:

"The Lord is not slow about keeping His promise as some people think. He is waiting for you. The Lord does not want any person to be punished forever. He wants all people to be sorry for their sins and turn from them."

Back to Acts 10.38, we know that Jesus came to heal people and deliver everyone oppressed by the devil. In the Garden of Eden things were perfect – there was no death, sickness or evil. When we look forward to the end of time and being with Jesus in heaven, again we know there is no death, sickness or evil. So we know that the root of evil, sickness and death comes ultimately from the devil and the evil that he has led people into.

Jesus said this in John 10.10 – "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

The thief is the devil. He wants to steal, to kill, to destroy. Jesus came to do the exact opposite – to bring people life and to give them life now and into eternity that is the best and most full life you can have. The devil lies to people, tricking them into thinking that life is about doing what you want and pleasing yourself. But what people are actually doing when they live this way, is serving satan. Living life without God and rejecting him actually leads people into slavery – into death and destruction. Just ask the average celebrity what they truly feel like and nearly all of them will feel empty, unhappy, lost and lonely. The persona you see in public is just an act. But Jesus comes to actually set people free to live the best possible life. If you're struggling in life, ask Jesus to take control of that area and give you his life!

Finally, we know that the things Jesus did happened because God was with him. When we see what Jesus did, we see God's will and we see what the Kingdom of God looks like. Jesus only did what he saw the father do (John 5.19) so we know what God's will and kingdom looks like – Jesus!

End Thoughts

We should make it a kingdom prayer for God to deliver us and the world around us from evil. We should also take action to bring God's life and push back the darkness, the oppression, the destruction and the evil. The time is at hand when good is shining out compared to evil. Our prayer of God's kingdom come is to make that light brighter and wider!

So your challenge is to ask God to let you become and live a life of the Kingdom of God. It will be a challenge and won't always be easy. But God is with you and what you do now will last a lifetime. Build the Kingdom of God. Choose to be and to bring light and life!!