

“Thy Kingdom Come”

September 24, 2017

**Our Savior’s Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Tyson Labuhn**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This morning, we’re taking a look at the 2nd Petition of the Lord’s Prayer – “Thy Kingdom Come.” In doing so, we want to acknowledge that God reigns over His Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God can certainly come by itself even without our prayer. Yet, as Luther shares in his explanation of this petition, we also pray that the Kingdom of God may come to us as well. For since the beginning, God has reigned over His creation and His Kingdom of power is seen throughout creation.

Now, I don’t know about you, but it seems that I’ve been paying more attention to the news lately. For me, it might have started over the course of the last several weeks when someone asked me about Hurricane Harvey (Category 4), which hit Houston, Texas hard with all the rain and flooding that occurred. Then soon after, there was the Category 5 Hurricane Irma that seemed to hit the entire state of Florida. And while it seems there has been an increased threat from the taunts and missiles launched from North Korea, this past Tuesday there was a 7.1 earthquake in Mexico. This past Thursday, Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico as a Category 4 hurricane. Through our door offerings, we were able to raise and send \$2,499 to those in need. Yet our prayers still go out to those who continue to be affected by all of this devastation.

It really shouldn't have surprised me at all this past week, when someone brought to my attention a story in the Washington Post about a Numerologist who believes there is a correlation between a Planet X that passed over Jerusalem last night and the beginning of the end times. While NASA has discredited this theory, I would also like to remind you of what Jesus told His disciples on the Mount of Olives in the parable of the faithful and wise servant – “Therefore, you must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”(Matthew 24:44)

We pray “Thy Kingdom Come” because we live in a sinful world and need God’s Kingdom to come among us. As individuals, many of our relationships have been, and continue to be, broken. We’re often prideful— full of selfish ambition and self-righteous in both the words that we use and in our actions. Even in the church, we can become like those in our Gospel reading who begrudge God’s generosity, reasoning to ourselves that since we’ve worked the longest, we should also expect to be paid the most, or at least be treated as if we were the owners of the vineyard. However, resentment, pride, self-righteousness, and even selfish ambition can lead us away from the Kingdom of God.

So, we pray “Thy Kingdom Come” because we need God’s Kingdom of Grace, The Kingdom of Grace which comes to us through our Lord Jesus. Even before His death on the cross, Jesus visited people who were weighed down by sin. He healed many of those afflicted by various diseases. He had the power to bring those who were dead, back to life. Yet, He carried our sins of resentment, pride, self-righteousness, and selfish ambition as well as the sins of the whole world upon Himself and died with them on the cross. He did this so that by Grace through faith, all who believe in Him might have forgiveness and new life in the Kingdom of God once again.

Like many today, when Jesus walked this earth, people believed that the coming Messiah would bring about the Kingdom of God on the earth. Even John the Baptist asked, “Are you the one to come or shall we look for another?”(Matthew 11:3) But, because the Kingdom of God is more spiritual in nature and exists where Jesus is, Jesus responds by saying, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”(Matthew 11:4-6)

The Kingdom of God exists through His Words and Actions - even if it is in the hearts and minds of believers, who inhabit earthly countries and kingdoms. It comes to us when His Gospel is preached and when we partake in His Sacraments. We enter His Spiritual Kingdom through baptism by water and the Spirit. We are born anew as children of God. It's in this restored relationship with God, and by the indwelling of His Spirit, that we pray “Thy Kingdom Come”, and as with the faith of a child, we trust in His guidance when His Kingdom begins to work in and through us.

Through our words and actions in His Kingdom, we store up treasures in heaven as we help those in need. When we support Rise Against Hunger, freely giving of our time, talents, and treasures, like we will in the Great Room next week, God's Kingdom of Grace provides meals to those in need. When we support our missionaries who go and tell the Gospel in places we can't, God's Kingdom of Grace is extended even further. Today, Derek and Mimi Elles from Straight Path ministries are joining us this morning. They are missionaries whom we support and visit on a regular basis. If you'd like, feel free to speak to them after the service about the work they are doing in Guatemala.

When we pray “Thy Kingdom Come” we're fully aware that when God extends His Kingdom, conflict and opposition are sure to

follow, so we pray that all would go well for all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. For those of us who are struggling to make ends meet as well as those who struggling to survive the devastation brought about from natural disasters – in Texas, Florida, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, and for all in harm's way, we pray "Thy Kingdom Come" for them, so that they might be protected, loved, and cared for, and their faith in a brighter future might be restored once again.

We know full well that in the end, the Kingdom of God will overpower and reign supreme over any physical or spiritual rule on or under the earth. Because when the sick are healed, those who are handicapped are made whole, and the dead in Christ will rise again to new life, and still even greater gifts than these are yet to come.

When we hear of military conflicts, political maneuverings, and national disasters that continue to fill the news, we can rejoice that the return of Christ is closer than ever before. For one day, His Kingdom will come again in all its Glory, extending Christ's rule and reign throughout eternity which has come to us by grace through that saving faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. May each one of us be found in that saving grace, so that we might sing our praises and give Him Glory, both now and always.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.