

Lord Teach Us To Pray

"Your Kingdom Come"

Lesson 5

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In recent years we have witnessed an increasingly rapid decline of more than 150 years of strong Christian biblical influence in this country.
 - A. Some have suggested that we are NOW living in POST-Christian America.
 1. Some have even argued that it seems more like we're living in SUB-Christian America.
 2. People ATTEND religious services and SAY they believe in God, but at BEST they adhere to a kind of situational morality.
 3. Whatever REMNANTS of Christianity that may still remain in our culture has become WEAK and COMPROMISED, if not cultic and apostate.
 - B. Our nation NOW AFFIRMS, through its legislative bodies and courts, a distinctively ANTI-Christian agenda.
 1. Anything that is even REMOTELY associated with Christianity has been virtually SWEPT AWAY under the guise of EQUAL RIGHTS and MORAL FREEDOM.
 - a. The divine standards and biblical morality that our nation ONCE embraced are being CONSTANTLY assaulted.
 - b. MORAL FREEDOM now reigns.
 - c. Materialism and the breakdown of the family are epidemic.
 - d. Abortion, sexual evils, an in-your-face gay and lesbian agenda, drugs, and crime are rampant.
 - e. And our leaders are at a loss to know what to do because there are no standards left to provide controls for these problems.

- II. For those of us who remember the spiritual awakening of '70s, the moral decadence of the new millennium is especially saddening.
 - A. But that sadness, if left unchecked, will lead us to resent those in the government, the media, and society who are actively ENCOURAGING an anti-Christian agenda.
 - 1. But what concerns me most, is the hostility among believers toward those in our nation's leadership who either promote an anti-Christian agenda or turn the other way and passively allow a further eroding of our country's moral fiber.
 - a. When THAT ATTITUDE merges with the idea that Christians should impact our society by LEGISLATING MORALITY, the church becomes SEVERELY DIVERTED from its main purpose.
 - B. Although its certainly a noble goal attempting to move our society back to a higher moral standard through by legislating morality, we need to realize that has never been Christ's goal for His church.
 - 1. The church has only one mission in this world: to lead people who are destined to spend eternity in hell to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and an eternity in heaven.
 - 2. This is NOT SAYING we shouldn't use the freedoms we have to defeat anti-Christian laws and vote out of office political leaders who openly promote moral compromise – WE SHOULD!
 - a. I FIRMLY believe EVERY Christian should exercise their right to vote.
 - 3. But we need to remember that the mission of the Lord's CHURCH has NEVER been to promote ANY political agenda.
 - a. Whether people live and die in a communist country or a democracy, whether they live and die under the rule of a tyrant or a benevolent dictator, whether they live and die in a country that sanctions homosexuality and defends abortion as a woman's fundamental right to choose or they live and die in a country that promotes a Biblical morality – whether people live and die under

ANY of these types of government has ABSOLUTELY NO BEARING on where they will spend eternity.

- b. If they never knew Christ and never embraced Him as their Lord and Savior, or if they have completely turned their back on the Lord and walked away, they will spend eternity in torment forever separated from God.
- C. Concerning the Lord's kingdom, Jesus told Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews."* **(John 18:36)**
1. No human kingdom or society can ever merge with God's kingdom, even partially.
 2. Satan – the god of this world – has a FIRM GRIP on godless leaders of this world, and he ALWAYS HAS.
 - a. That's why we can NEVER advance GOD'S KINGDOM by trying to improve the morals of our society through legislative efforts.
 - b. Good and noble causes may certainly be worthy of our support, but these good and noble causes will never help us win souls to Jesus Christ.
 - c. At best promoting good and noble causes will only slow down the corruption that will ALWAYS characterize human societies and kingdoms.
 3. NO ONE is more patriotic than me. But I must say, sadly, that America has ONLY ONE DESTINY: to go the way of all the nations, kingdoms and empires that have gone before her.
 - a. NO human government will endure forever because it IS a human government, and humans have one problem – we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. **(Romans 3:23)**
 - b. And, since sinful humans become members of the legislature and the judiciary, the government itself will become sinful.
 - c. Solomon says, *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach* ("a disgrace" – NASB) *to any people"* **(Proverbs 14:34)**

- d. Paul and Barnabas told the people of the city of Lystra that God, “. . . *in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.*” **(Acts 14:16)**
- D. While all the kingdoms of the world, including America, rise and fall, Jesus said the gates of hell will never prevail against God’s kingdom. **(Matthew 16:18)**
 1. You may be frustrated by our nation’s immoral agenda and its animosity toward God, but you can be confident that even now Christ is building His church.
 2. One day the Lord will return and that’s when we’ll finally realize what we have so anxiously longed for – and what the disciples of Christ in the first century desired – to see Christ enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords at the right hand of God in heaven.

BODY:

- I. When we take a closer look at the model prayer Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew chapter 6, we’re immediately confronted with the words: “Your kingdom come!” What do those words mean, and can we pray today for the Lord’s kingdom to come? Let’s first begin with the word “*kingdom*” – what does it mean?
 - A. In modern language, the word “*kingdom*” suggests a territory – an area of land that is under the domain of a King. But that is not how the word was used in the New Testament.
 1. In the New Testament, the phrase “*kingdom of God*” or “*kingdom of heaven*” was not referring to an area or territory that belonged to the Lord – rather it referred to the SOVEREIGNTY, the LORDSHIP, the RULE and the REIGN of the Lord.
 2. The Greek word translated “*kingdom*” (*basileia*) is generally used to refer to sovereignty and dominion.
 - a. Therefore when we pray, “*Your kingdom come,*” we are praying for God’s rule – or God’s sovereignty and dominion.

- B. The kingdom we are praying for doesn't belong to any earthly monarch: it belongs to *"our Father in heaven."* **(Matthew 6:9)**
1. As believers – as citizens of this Kingdom – we are no longer OF this world, even though we are IN this world. **(John 17:14)**
 - a. By that we mean that our PRIMARY interest has been translated out of this world, and our REAL CITIZENSHIP is now IN HEAVEN.
 - b. We are actually sojourners and pilgrims **(1 Peter 1:17)**, waiting to enter a city whose builder and maker is God **(Heb. 11:10)**.
- C. So, when Jesus told His disciples to pray: *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come..."*, our Lord had NO INTENTIONS WHATSOEVER of referring to some kind of TERRITORIAL kingdom over which the Lord would reign as an earthly King.
1. This is important to understand because there are some religious people today who believe this is exactly what the term means.
 - a. There are those in the religious world who hold to the idea of a millennial reign (1,000 year reign) of Christ on the earth someday in the future – claiming that when Jesus came the first time, He intended to establish that kind of kingdom.
 - (1). They say since Jesus was rejected by the Jews and crucified, He had to go back to Heaven until some time in the future when He will return and establish the kingdom on earth and reign as its King for a thousand years.
 - b. Some of our own brethren get confused when they talk about the kingdom and the church – thinking of the Lord's church as some kind of institution.
 - (1). While it's true that the terms *"kingdom"* and *"church"* are also used interchangeably in the New Testament, and while it's true that from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 onward, the *"kingdom"* is spoken of as being in existence, it's wrong to think of the *"kingdom"* or the *"church"* as being an *"institution"*

– some kind of physical, material “**thing**” of which we are all members.

(2). Even our speech sometimes betrays us – including my own. We say such things as, “where do you go to church,” or “are you a member of the church,” or “what time does church get out.”

D. So, how do we properly define the term “*kingdom*?” As we said earlier, the simple way the Lord used the term simply meant the **sovereignty** of the Lord, or a state and condition of things in which the Lord rules and reigns Supreme.

1. Surprisingly, this is how many of the Jews in Jesus’ day understood the phrase “*kingdom of God*” or “*kingdom of heaven*.”

a. Jewish Rabbis and teachers always sought to make a distinction between the “yoke of heavenly sovereignty,” and the “yoke of ungodly sovereignty,” or the “yoke of flesh and blood.”

(1). In other words, they understood we are either under the sovereign rule of the Lord, or we are under the reign of our own fleshly nature. One or the other rules and controls our lives – either the Lord, or the flesh.

b. This is why every synagogue service began (and still begins) with the recital of the “**Great Shema**” – “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*” (**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**).

(1). Every time a Jew recited those words, he was reminding himself that he was taking upon himself the “yoke of the sovereignty of the Lord” – he was acknowledging Jehovah as the ABSOLUTE and ONLY LORD OF HIS LIFE.

II. When we examine OTHER references the Lord made to the “kingdom,” we find some things that not only flew in the face of popular thinking, but to some, teachings that even seemed contradictory.

- A. For example, there were times when Jesus spoke of the “kingdom” as coming in the future, then at other times He spoke of the “kingdom” as though it were already in existence.
1. One example of this was when Jesus healed the demon-possessed man. Jesus said, *“if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God HAS COME upon you.”* **(Matthew 12:28, and Luke 11:20)**
 - a. We also read where Jesus told a man, *“You ARE not far from the kingdom of God.”* **(Mark 12:34)**
 - b. On another occasion, Jesus said *“the kingdom of God IS WITHIN YOU”* (some translations say *“the kingdom of God IS AMONG YOU”*) **(Luke 17:20-21)**
 2. However, on other occasions, Jesus and John both preached, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is AT HAND”* – near to becoming a reality. **(Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15)**
 - a. Jesus told His disciples, *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God PRESENT WITH POWER”* **(Mark 9:1 - NKJV).**
 - b. The King James Version reads, *“And he said unto them, ‘Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God COME WITH POWER.”* **(Mark 9:1 - KJV)**
 - c. And the New American Standard Bible is even more emphatic: *“And Jesus was saying to them, ‘Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God AFTER IT HAS COME WITH POWER.”* (Mark 9:1 - NASB).
 - (1). In other words, Jesus said many of those who were hearing Him at that moment would still be living when the kingdom of God comes with power.

- B. So, how is it possible for the “*kingdom*” to be IN someone, OR for the “*kingdom*” to HAVE COME, and yet still be COMING in the future?
1. Let’s go back to our definition of the word “kingdom.” It is the sovereignty of the Lord, or a state or condition of things in which the Lord rules and reigns Supreme.
 - a. When we use the words “sovereignty of the Lord,” or the words “rule and reign,” we are describing A RELATIONSHIP.
 - (1). We are describing a close, intimate relationship with the Lord in which He rules and reigns within our hearts.
 - (2). We are talking about our hearts and minds being under the sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ – where the Lord is clearly recognized and accepted as our Sovereign Lord and God – the Sovereign Ruler of our hearts, souls, minds and spirits.
 2. This is what Jesus meant when He talked about the “*kingdom of God.*”
 - a. He was describing a state or condition of things where the Lord would rule and reign within the hearts of men and women everywhere.
 - b. He was describing an intimate relationship in which THE LORD IS IN US, and where WE ARE IN THE LORD – where we are intimately bound together in a relationship much like a marriage.
 - (1). It would be a kind of “one flesh” type of relationship – where we are inseparably welded and joined together.
 - (2). It would be the kind of relationship where the Lord is our Husband and we are His faithful, loving and devoted wife – where we are literally the Bride of Christ.
 3. Jesus NEVER came for the purpose of establishing a physical, material, earthly kingdom. Rather, He came to establish the kind of “kingdom” where He would rule and reign as sovereign Lord and King in the hearts of men and women.

a. This is the kind of “kingdom” God has always wanted to have with His people. Two Old Testament passages clearly illustrate this.

(1). **Judges 8:22-23** – *“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.’ But Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.’”*

(2). **1 Samuel 8:1-7** – *“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.’ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ So Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.’”*

C. Perhaps the one passage that is most important in our understanding of the “kingdom,” is a statement Jesus made to the religious leaders of His day.

1. In **Luke 17:20-21**, it reads, *“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’”*

a. Jesus said the coming of His kingdom would not be observed. In other words, it would not be like the coming of most kingdoms –

with a military campaign of advancing armies and warfare. The coming of His kingdom would be UNOBSERVABLE. WHY?

- b. Jesus said His kingdom is “*within you.*” It is the INTERNAL RULING AND REIGNING of the Lord within the hearts of men and women – the way God had always intended for it to be.
- c. This is how we can be IN THE KINGDOM, while at the same time the kingdom is IN US.
 - (1). In other words, we can be in a fellowship of others who have the Lord ruling and reigning in their hearts, while at the same time have the Lord ruling and reigning in ours.

CONCLUSION:

- I. When we pray, “*Your kingdom come,*” we are saying to God, “I am completely surrendering MY WILL to YOURS. I want to do what YOU will for me to do so that YOU will ultimately be glorified.”
 - A. A true child of God won’t be preoccupied with his OWN plans and desires, but with the plans and desires of God, and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- II. And yet, in spite of our desire to be preoccupied with God’s kingdom, our prayers are usually self-centered.
 - A. We focus on our needs, our plans, and our aspirations.
 - 1. We are often like tiny infants, who knows no world but that of their own feelings and wants.
 - a. Our lives are an unending struggle against our old sinful habits.
 - 2. That’s why the kingdom must ALWAYS be at the heart of our prayers.
 - a. So, before we rush into the Lord’s presence with all OUR petitions, we need to stop long enough to consider HIS CAUSE and HIS KINGDOM.
 - b. We need to affirm that it is truly our desire for the Lord to be glorified in all that we do and say.
 - B. Are YOU glorifying the Lord in all you do and say?

1. If you're a faithful child of God, glorifying the Lord is a regular part of your life.
2. But if you've never obeyed the gospel of Christ – never surrendered your life to the Lord – or if you are an unfaithful child of God, your life cannot glorify the Lord, no matter how good you may be.
3. **2 Thessalonians 1:3-12** – *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
4. Don't run the risk of suffering the "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" by your refusal to make Jesus Christ the sovereign ruler of your life.
5. Instead, let "*the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"